CUSTOM-BUILT RIGS, CUSTOMIZED CONSCIOUSNESS

AMONG WOMEN TRUCK DRIVERS
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AMONG WOMEN TRUCK DRIVERS

By

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Abstract

This research examines a specific form of gender consciousness among women truck drivers that emerges from the social relations of work and the social relations of gender. Through in-depth interviewing of women truck drivers in Ontario, valuable information was gathered that reveals the motivations for entering this occupation, the social relations within the family, and the structural constraints on women who work in this nontraditional occupation. The focus of this study encompasses both paid labour and unpaid household responsibilities, and the interconnections between the two, as women consciously attempt to balance this workload. In both workplaces, class and gender relations predominate in discussions related to the structural constraints placed on women. However, the most remarkable discovery is the manner in which women truck drivers borrow beliefs and ideas from two competing gender ideologies in order to justify their own lives. By meticulously selecting contradictory ideas and values from both patriarchal and feminist ideology, these women create an individual "customized gender consciousness" that is constructed to suit their own material existence. This research, therefore, synthesizes both gender consciousness and the working lives of women truck drivers--two topics of which very little information has previously been documented, particularly from a Canadian perspective.
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Chapter One

Introduction

I've had a lot of male truck drivers ask me, "Do you wanna be treated as a truck driver or do you wanna be treated as a lady?" ... and I says, "How about a truck driver that still likes to have her cigarettes lit for her and her doors opened" ... I like having my cigarettes lit, my doors opened ... I like being treated like a lady ... treat me like a lady but respect me for what I do ... and if you're not going to respect me, you best stay to hell out of my way 'cause I'll just ... stay out of my way ... but respect me for what I do and treat me like a lady ...

These comments are made by a woman truck driver, who owns her own tractor trailer, and drives long distance, hauling steel, lumber and heavy equipment within Canada and across the border into the United States. At first glance, the statements made by this trucker, and many of the other women truck drivers, appear to be contradictory. On the one hand, women truck drivers have entered an occupation that has traditionally been regarded as a "man's job", and has been associated with a very macho or "masculine" image. On the other hand, these truckers are very conscious of being women in a male-dominated industry, and the desire to be "treated like a lady" emerges frequently in their conversations. The references to certain privileges such as having doors opened and cigarettes lit conjure up traditional images of passive femininity; however statements such as "you best stay to hell out of my way", and other comments made by women truckers, negate any vision of dependency or submission, and reveal the strong-willed, independent character of these women. Buried beneath the surface of the superficial expression of privileges and special treatment is a genuine desire to be valued for who they are, and to be respected because of their difference as women. At the same time, a delicate balance or tension exists between the struggle to maintain their
difference as women and their emphatic belief in equality or sameness with men, in terms of their ability to perform the job of truck driver.

Women represent a gendered minority in this occupation, comprising only three percent of the total number of truck drivers on the road in both Ontario and Canada. Because women are greatly outnumbered in this occupation, gender relations become very salient. Indeed, in many cases, these women truck drivers are the only women in their workplace, with the exception of office workers. Consequently, the contradictions between the "masculine" image of truck driving and the conscious desire to maintain a gender difference as women in a male-dominated occupation, become more amplified. In any case, these women exhibit a complex mixture of beliefs and ideas surrounding work and gender, which comprise a specific form of gender consciousness among women truck drivers.

The purpose of this thesis is to examine gender consciousness among women truck drivers. Gender consciousness among women truck drivers emerges from the material base, in the work that women perform in both the paid workplace and the unpaid labour in the home, as well as from socially constructed gender ideologies. The central argument of the thesis is that women truck drivers have meticulously selected or borrowed beliefs and ideas from both feminist ideology and patriarchal ideology, in order to create a "customized gender consciousness" that justifies their material existence.

In this regard, the dynamic relationship between gender ideologies and individual gender consciousness will be explored. For just as gender ideologies impose structural constraints on individual actions and the type of work that people do, individuals can accept, resist or modify ideologies to give meaning to their own lives. In other words, individuals have the capability of modifying certain values, beliefs and ideas from within the parameters of competing ideologies. Ideologies, therefore, originate at the structural level, and are propagated on a universal basis. In contrast, consciousness occurs at the individual or group level and may or
may not coincide with any one particular ideology. However, very little has been written on gender consciousness in either traditional or nontraditional occupations.

At the same time, an enormous amount of literature has been written in the last two decades on women working in nontraditional occupations, documenting both the negative and the positive aspects of working in a male atmosphere. Experiences of intimidation, hostility, gender discrimination, sexual harassment and coercion of females by male management and co-workers are not unusual. At the same time a sense of accomplishment, satisfaction and surprise that male jobs are not as difficult as women imagined them to be has been recognized. Accounts of females working in non-traditional occupations include women working as heavy duty equipment mechanics, steel workers, pump tenders, coalminers, carpenters, machinists, labourers, and even police officers. However, articles on women truck drivers rarely show up in the academic literature.

The scant amount of literature written about truck drivers reflects the gender composition of this occupation and consists primarily of books and articles written by men about men. Most of the literature originates in the United States, with the exception of one book which is written by a sociologist from Great Britain who theoretically examines the structural constraints of the job and the resulting alienation of the drivers. American writings on the topic vary from discussions on the occupational role of male truck drivers to the relations between truckers and their unions. Other American writers merely describe or dissect the romanticized vision of urban cowboy or "knight of the road", in an attempt to give a more realistic picture of the occupation. Only two of the books mention women truckers, but comparatively speaking, these are small passages and they are atheoretical.

Research on women truck drivers and their experience is scarce and the majority of the writing is descriptive rather than theoretical. All articles are written by women and examine American women's experiences as truck drivers. Three small chapters on women truckers are found in books that document the experiences of women in nontraditional occupations, and
describe each woman’s life as a truck driver. Similarly, another one-page article written in a feminist journal provides an interesting account of two women who formed a small company of their own and are operating it collectively.

The only theoretical article on women truck drivers, written by Muriel Faltz Lembright and Jeffrey W. Riemer, focuses primarily on team drivers or women who drive with another person, usually a husband or male companion. In their article, Lembright and Riemer have identified the very significant concept of sponsorship, and in the trucking industry, male sponsorship is extremely important for women truckers trying to gain access to training and integration into the male hierarchy. Unfortunately, Lembright and Riemer’s article is mainly on team drivers to the detriment of adequately detailing the experiences of women who drive by themselves. This deficiency of information is regrettable since my own research reveals that there is a profound difference between the experiences of women who drive alone and women who drive as a team. In addition, the articles on women truck drivers describe the American experience.

The absence of theoretical research from a Canadian perspective makes my research on women truck drivers very unique. Furthermore, research on women truck drivers at this point in time, roughly three decades after women began joining the ranks of this occupational category, is extremely valuable since many of the pioneering women in this area have now become established. In addition, the effect of working as part of a gendered minority, on the consciousness of women, has not been explored either descriptively or theoretically.

Consequently, in Chapter two, a review of the literature on the subject of consciousness will be addressed, in order to provide a theoretical background from which to begin. Building on previous literature and research on consciousness, and particularly on women’s consciousness, a theory of gender consciousness among women truck drivers will be constructed and outlined in great detail. Feminist concepts, such as the separation of public
and private work spheres and the gendered division of labour, have been employed in order to construct this theory.

Chapter three depicts the four methodological techniques utilized in the process of conducting this research. The primary method of gathering data is through in-depth interviews with women truck drivers. The other three methods of data collection include a short telephone survey of managers in trucking and transportation companies, participant observation, and document analysis of Census statistics in order to determine the number of women truckers at the present time and throughout history.

Chapter four places this research within an historical context. A brief history of the trucking industry will be combined with Census data on women truck drivers, looking at the decades between 1931 and 1986, in terms of numbers and percentages of women in this occupational category. At the same time, gender ideologies will be discussed as they relate to various periods during this historical time frame, in an attempt to locate economic and ideological convergence with individual motivation or conscious desire by women who wish to perform this job.

Individual motivation for becoming a truck driver will be discussed in Chapter five. This chapter will begin by exploring intra-familial relations and conclude with the personal reasons that women provide for becoming truck drivers. The interrelationship between ideology and consciousness among women truck drivers will be discussed in terms of the contradictions and encouragement that women receive from their families prior to training.

Training and hiring of women truck drivers will be explored in Chapter six. Two types of training will be addressed and linked to the social relations that these women have with other truck drivers, particularly family members. Institutionalized truck driving training schools will be compared with on-the-road training provided by family and friends who are normally male truck drivers. The last half of the chapter reviews the accessibility to jobs, the barriers
to employment and the changing attitudes of some managers in trucking corporations with respect to hiring women as truck drivers.

The formal structure of work as a truck driver is discussed in Chapter seven, examining both gender and class relations and their effects on gender consciousness. The three specific topics of time management, wages, and hours of work, will be covered. The conflicts between paid work and unpaid labour will be scrutinized. The effect of unpaid labour such as housework, childbearing and childrearing on the number of hours women can spend in paid labour, efficiency, and the differences in wages between women and men will be analyzed.

The informal social relations of work, particularly gender relations between women and men in the trucking industry, constitute the majority of information in Chapter eight. Because women represent a small gendered minority of truckers in the industry, various strategies of resistance are consciously employed by women truck drivers as a way of surviving. These strategies of resistance will be examined within the structural parameters of male dominance and class relations.

The final chapter will consist of concluding remarks and implications for further research. A comparison between the gender consciousness of women truck drivers and feminist consciousness will be included, as well as the range of beliefs and attitudes held by women truck drivers, that repudiate any notion of homogeneity in this group of individuals. Finally, the importance of customized consciousness for explaining social change will be addressed.

Throughout this research, the comments and perspectives of women truck drivers have been documented by the use of quotations. Indeed, an earnest attempt to incorporate the original words and ideas of women truckers is made, in order to allow the women to speak for themselves. The quotations have been written in a style which denotes that their ideas came forth in a stream of consciousness, rather than in complete, structured sentences. In presenting their comments in this manner, I am hopeful that their spirit, individuality,
independence and strength of character will become evident to the reader. Although a sample of twenty women truck drivers is very small and may or may not be generalizable to the population of women truckers, hopefully, this thesis truthfully reflects the realities of this small group of women truck drivers. In any case, these women have struggled and survived in a male-dominated workplace and have paved the way for others who wish to follow.
Notes

1. A book entitled *Canadians and Their Occupations: A Profile*, published in January 1989, and included as part of the 1986 Census of Canada, confirms that three percent of truck drivers are women in both Canada and Ontario.


6. Stan Gray gives a detailed account of a female pump tender at Stelco whose experiences with sexual harassment led her to file a complaint with the Human Rights Commission and finally to bring charges against Stelco through the Labour Board.


10. The book, entitled *The Lorry Driver*, written by Peter G. Hollowell assumes that lorry drivers are all male, but this may be a consequence of the early date of publication, 1968.


14. In Robert Krueger's book, *Gypsy on 18 Wheels*, six pages out of one hundred and fifty-one are devoted to women truck drivers. The section on women who drive with their husbands as part of a team is called "Truck Driver's Wife" (pp.70-73). The two page article on women who drive alone, entitled "Satin and Steel", is written by Monti Tak, a woman trucker. Similarly, in Jane Stern's book, *Trucker: A Portrait of the last American Cowboy*, only the last twelve pages out of one hundred and sixty-three describe the lives of women truck drivers.


17. Muriel Faltz Lembright and Jeffrey W. Riemer, "Women Truckers' Problems and the Impact of Sponsorship", *Work and Occupations*, Vol. 9, No. 4, pp. 457-474. Muriel Faltz Lembright had first-hand experience with truck drivers as she was married to one and accompanied him on many of his cross-country runs.

18. Although Lembright and Riemer suggest that male truckers are "unintentional sponsors", that their motives are self-serving in that the women are exploited by these men, the importance of having a male conduit into a male-dominated field cannot be denied.
Chapter Two

Theories of Consciousness and the Creation of

"Customized Gender Consciousness" Among Women Truck Drivers

In the beginning I used to think, 'Oh, I'm one of the guys now, I can walk into a truck stop and sit down and have a coffee and chat' ... and then I realized that they didn't look at me like that ... they didn't think that I was one of the guys ... it's like walking into a factory where there's men working and they all stare like they have never seen a woman ... and then I kept to myself, after the first six months or so ...

I think being a woman, you have to do the job twice as well as a man just to be called equal ... you really do ... and a lot of the jibes you get ... and you do get a lot of jibes ... and you have to be able to just look past them, you know ... not to let them bother you too much ...

Managing the house ... and getting supplies in ... it's hard ... it's hard to settle down after coming in from a week on the road and then get your mind into the home ... and then it's hard when you go back next week ... to get back into the truck and stay awake, you know ... it's really hard to make the switch-over ...

I think the biggest thing with women is just the kids ... you just can't, you know, you can't leave them in this day and age ... you just feel like you should be home ... like I do ...

A common thread that runs throughout the first two passages above is a consciousness of gender that occurs as women truck drivers struggle to be accepted in a male-dominated workplace where traditional images of women and men are still very much engrained. The last two quotations illustrate that the conflicts between paid work and household labour that women truckers face are very similar to those of other women in more traditional jobs. For many women, the conscious reality of balancing paid work with pregnancy, child care and household responsibilities, is endemic across occupations. However, women who enter nontraditional jobs such as truck driving are constantly reminded of their gender more than
women in traditional occupations because they represent an anomaly in that occupation, and as a result, they are often treated differently than their male co-workers, and this fact also affects their consciousness.

The purpose of this chapter is twofold. The first task is to detail theoretically how gender consciousness among women truck drivers emerges out of the social relations of work and the social relations of gender. The second requirement is to differentiate what I have called "customized gender consciousness" among women truck drivers from other forms of gender consciousness. However, before these requirements are realized, a review of the pertinent literature is necessary as background to understanding the concept of consciousness.

Understanding Consciousness

Consciousness has different meanings to different people, as well as a variety of origins, depending on who is doing the analysis. For Marx and Engels, consciousness emerges out of the material base, the actual life process. In *The German Ideology*, Marx and Engels say that

The production of ideas, of conceptions, of consciousness, is at first directly interwoven with the material activity and the material intercourse of men, the language of real life.

The emphasis on the material base is in direct contradistinction to the reified conception of ideas and consciousness held by the Young Hegelians of their time. Marx and Engels stressed the inseparability of individual and consciousness in response to German ideologists who were treating consciousness as an entity in itself. At the same time, the generic reference to men and their work either assumes that the construction of consciousness is universal across genders, or otherwise leaves unaccounted the female half of the population.

The problem, therefore, lies in determining whether women have a consciousness that is derived similarly to that of men, that is, from their labour, or whether there are other spheres of human activity from which consciousness emerges. If there are differences between
women and men in terms of consciousness, what is the relationship between the two? The first step, however, is to determine what is meant by women’s consciousness? To help unravel the complexities of consciousness in women, a review of the pertinent feminist literature written over the past few decades is necessary.

Understanding Consciousness in Women

Many feminists have argued that women do indeed have a different consciousness than men. Dorothy Smith, for example, argues that women have a "bifurcated consciousness" as a result of their exclusion from positions of power within the social structure. Through her emphasis on discourse, she stresses the difference in consciousness between women and men, and says that because our culture or "social consciousness" has been manufactured by males in the "relations of the ruling", our language and institutions represent masculine expressions of consciousness and women are left with a sense of "otherness" or exclusion.

Although an understanding of how masculine language and ideas pervade the organizational and personal lives of people is extremely useful and insightful, the difficulty with this approach is that both genders, men and women alike, are treated as monolithic groups. For working class men, the language of the ruling, or the most powerful men in society, may be as alien and unacceptable as it is for women. At the same time, masculine language and ideas are often appropriated by women and accepted as their own. A problem also occurs, therefore, when a universal consciousness is assumed within gender groups.

A universality of reproductive consciousness within women is also assumed in the writing of Mary O’Brien. In The Politics of Reproduction, O’Brien argues that male dominance has its origins in the ideologies surrounding human reproduction. She meticulously outlines the politics surrounding the gender-biased, reproductive ideologies that have been formulated by influential male philosophers throughout history. She begins from the material base of reproduction and utilizes a dialectic approach, emphasizing the differences in consciousness
between women and men, while at the same time assuming a universal reproductive consciousness within gender groups.

Along the same theme, the concept of a women’s culture that is different from men’s culture is outlined in a book by Bettina Aptheker. While consciousness is not universal, in that it is not experienced the same way by all women and is mediated by class, race/ethnicity, age, and sexual orientation, Aptheker believes there is a common culture between women. She says that the gendered division of labour and the subordination of women form the base of women’s consciousness and she argues that women express their consciousness through their artwork, including their poetry, sculpture, stories, tapestries, and so forth, to create a distinctive culture different from that of men.

The differences between men and women are emphasized by all three of the above writers, whether they are talking about culture, reproductive consciousness or language. Ironically, the division by gender is as evident in these writings as it is in the workplace, something which many feminists have been trying to eradicate for decades. Another problem is that women and men are very often viewed as homogeneous groups. Within genders, there are divisions by class, race/ethnicity, age, sexual orientation and political beliefs. Another reality is that within the female population, only a minority of women claim to be feminist, and an even smaller group forms the collective and political nucleus that fights for change. However, that is not to say that feminists do not have an impact on the values, beliefs and ideas of the general populace and, in particular, the consciousness of women.

Sheila Rowbotham provides an interesting historical review of influential feminist writers, such as Simone de Beauvoir and Betty Friedan, which illustrates the impact that female writers have had on women’s consciousness, especially during the 1960s and 1970s. Rowbotham believes that feminist consciousness emerged out of a series of contradictions that women were experiencing in their everyday lives, such as the tension between the ‘public’ and ‘private’ spheres of women’s work lives and the difference between the dominant ideology and
the reality of women's material conditions. These contradictions provided a common ground on which to form a collective and political force for change known as feminism.

However, the feminist movement has not been without problems in attempting to incorporate women of different classes and races. Esther Ngan-Ling Chow carefully attests to the gulf that exists between Asian American women and the predominately white, middle-class feminist movement. She looks at both class and cultural differences in trying to explain why Asian women have gender consciousness but have felt restrained from developing feminist consciousness. For Chow, there are three components to "gender consciousness" and they include "Being female, awareness of gender roles, and an identification with other women". In contrast, "feminist consciousness" involves political action in the collective sense, in "the formation of group solidarity necessary for collective action in the struggle for gender equality". Chow feels that gender consciousness in women can develop into feminist consciousness given the proper conditions.

Both Rowbotham and Chow emphasize collective consciousness in women. This leads directly to an opposing line of thought. Can gender consciousness and feminist consciousness be identified at the individual level, irrespective of collective consciousness? If we are to believe the old feminist adage, "the personal is political", the answer has to be yes. But what about gender consciousness? Is gender consciousness the precursor of feminist consciousness or something totally different, and can we incorporate men into a study of gender consciousness?

The most recent Canadian literature on gender consciousness is an article written by D. W. Livingstone and Meg Luxton. One of the greatest strengths of this article is the emphasis on individual agency, relating the manner in which both women and men actively construct and modify gender relations at work, in the home and in the community, despite institutional, organizational and ideological constraints. They have examined individual gender consciousness within a feminist framework, in terms of "the personal is political", while
stressing the importance of class, using qualitative data collected from interviews with steelworkers and their spouses.

Unfortunately their framework for conceptualizing gender consciousness is a strange integration of a Marxist analysis of class consciousness and feminist terminology. By using a Marxist analysis of class consciousness,14 to explain gender consciousness, they are compelled to use analogies, despite acknowledging the differences between class and gender in terms of consciousness. Consequently terms such as "gender identity" and "oppositional gender consciousness"16 become reduced to individuals’ understanding, acceptance and modification of feminine and masculine roles, rather than a dialectical process whereby individual gender consciousness is constructed through both the reality of the persons’s material existence, and the dominant ideologies surrounding gender relations.

Similarly, the term "hegemonic gender consciousness"16 is also confusing and paradoxical, in that hegemonic delineations of gender relations normally originate at the structural level, with the intent to promulgate ideas and beliefs on a universal basis through the major institutions in society;17 whereas consciousness occurs at the individual or group level and may or may not concur with hegemonic gender definitions. Once again, the interaction between structural ideology and individual consciousness becomes blurred. However, they do suggest that most people have "mixed forms" of gender consciousness resulting from the existence of two contrasting forms of consciousness, "hegemonic masculinist consciousness" and "counter-hegemonic feminist consciousness".18 Here again is the problem of terminology.

A clearer and more precise explanation of the interaction between conflicting ideologies and consciousness comes from Rosalind Petchesky who states that consciousness is a dynamic process of accommodating the pressures of conflicting ideologies and values imposed by the dominant culture and various oppositional cultures on one's own sense of felt need. That sense, in turn, grows out of material and social constraints that may disrupt ideological preconceptions, constraints rooted in class and life situations and in the unconscious and the body.
Consciousness is thus a series of "negotiations" back and forth between ideology, social reality, and desire.\(^\text{18}\)

Rosalind Petchesky provides an interesting account of the contradictions within individual women themselves as they make choices regarding abortion. What she calls "the morality of praxis" embodies the tension between what women believe and what they actually do, and varies from person to person, depending on their social circumstances.\(^\text{20}\) She discounts the idea of a universal reproductive consciousness, in contrast to Mary O'Brien, and posits that reproductive consciousness varies according to class, ethnicity, age, individual gender relations, and the woman's relationship to work. Petchesky has consequently brought the level of analysis down to the individual, while at the same time emphasizing the dialectical relationship between structural ideologies and individual consciousness.

Petchesky's work was influenced by the writing of Sarah Eisenstein who uncovers the dynamics of two competing ideologies, as well as the dialectic relationship between ideology and consciousness in women between 1890 and the First World War.\(^\text{21}\) During this period, the Victorian ideology of true womanhood was challenged by the first wave of the women's movement. The notion of separate spheres and a division of labour into public and private domains, with men dominating all institutions in the public sphere and women relegated to caring for home and family, was thoroughly contested. The challenge to the separation of spheres manifested itself most vividly in the white, middle-class women's protest over the right to vote and participate in the public arena. However, Eisenstein reveals that the public sphere of production was the realm where the tension between the Victorian ideology of true womanhood and the consciousness of working class women became most prominent.

Eisenstein's work is valuable in that comparisons can be made between the first wave of the women's movement and what has happened since the second wave of the women's movement, which began in the 1960s. Both time spans were periods of rapid transition, when traditional gender relations were being redefined and re-examined. In terms of ideology, the first wave of the women's movement challenged the ideology of separate spheres, as well as
the double standard concerning sexuality. The double standard entailed a prerequisite that women remain virtuous, faithful and confined to the home after marriage or face social sanctions, a criterion which did not necessarily apply to men. The second wave of the women’s movement, not only contested the ideology of separate spheres, but also the gendered division of labour within both of these spheres. In addition, the right to control reproduction, including sexuality, is also seen as an absolute necessity by feminists. The contradiction between ideology and women’s lived reality that Eisenstein recounted during the first wave of the women’s movement was similarly documented by Betty Friedan in her book, *The Feminine Mystique*, at the beginning of the second wave of the women’s movement.\(^{22}\)

At the present time, competing gender ideologies of feminism and patriarchy impinge on the consciousness of both women and men. A recipe for conceptualizing consciousness from a socialist-feminist perspective is available in a short article written by Sandra Morgen.\(^{23}\) She says that a theory of consciousness must include

> the interaction of consciousness and ideology, particularly the way consciousness can break out of the grip of received ideas ... placed in the context of socialist-feminist understandings of the interconnectedness of "public" and "private domains (personal and political, work and family) and of the intersection of gender, race, and class ... \(^{24}\)

Morgen’s recipe for developing a theory of consciousness appears to be a good foundation from which to begin and an alternative version of consciousness will be systematically outlined below. The term "gender consciousness" has purposely been chosen for two reasons. First of all, the belief that this theory can be applied to both women and men, and therefore the word "gender", which denotes the social meaning of being a woman or a man becomes prominent. At the same time, a recognition of the link between biology and the social construction of gender is realized.\(^{26}\) Secondly, the word "consciousness" emphasizes the individual or group awareness, as opposed to a universally propagated system of values and beliefs.
Conceptualizing Gender Consciousness

This theory is grounded in concrete research on women truck drivers and therefore has a material base in working class experience. In addition, the abstract ideas of theory, including those of my advisors, and the authors acknowledged in the previous literature review, have been incorporated. This theory will also be written within a feminist framework, using concepts such as the 'separation of spheres' and the 'gendered division of labour', both within the paid workplace and unpaid realm of the home. In addition, the dialectic relation between ideology and consciousness will also be addressed, stressing the interaction between structure and the individual. Finally, the conflicting ideologies of patriarchy and feminism will be covered, noting the acceptance, rejection, or modification of these ideologies by individuals as they attempt to bring meaning to their life.

The notion of human agency or the ability of individuals to resist, or at least actively select values, beliefs and ideas from competing ideologies, is not new. Rather than viewing individuals as passive receptacles, accepting without question the values circulated by people in power, Frank Parkin says that

Clearly, values are generally not imposed on men in any crudely mechanistic way. Men also impose their will by selecting, as it were, from the range of values which any complex society generates.

Looking at the formation of value systems as a two-way process gives a more dynamic approach to the study of consciousness. At the same time, it must be acknowledged that factors other than gender and class relations can influence and affect consciousness, including race/ethnicity, sexual orientation and age. Therefore, depending on the real life conditions experienced by each individual, consciousness will vary from person to person. At the same time, consciousness remains within the parameters of the competing ideological structures.

The process by which people actively select values, beliefs and ideas from two or more competing ideologies to justify or give meaning to their everyday existence, I have called "gennovation". The term, "gennovation", was originally developed by combining the words
"gender" and "innovation". However, after looking at a Latin dictionary, I found that "genus" can mean "class, race, species, or kind", and "innovate" comes from the Latin verb, "novare", so the possibility of using this term to apply to innovative ways of incorporating and modifying ideologies surrounding class, race, sexual orientation or age may also be possible. At any rate, "gennovation", or the process of selecting values, beliefs and ideas from two or more competing ideologies is the way in which people give meaning to their life, and this is evident among women truck drivers.

As the research on women truck drivers progressed, a specific form of gender consciousness surfaced, which combined feminist beliefs and values with more traditional patriarchal ideas about women's roles and gender relations. This form of gender consciousness I have subsequently called, "customized gender consciousness", since it is made-to-measure or custom-built to suit the individual's material existence. "Customized gender consciousness" emerges out of the social relations of work and the social relations of gender, which filter down through ideological apparatuses such as the media, school, religion, and the political/legal system, and are subsequently modified to fit each individual's life.

A step-by-step progression of ideas that form the basis of this conception of gender consciousness is depicted in diagrams throughout the following text. Figure 2.1 below portrays pictorially the dialectical relationship (as noted by the double-headed arrows) between the material base of work, and the ideological structure of gender relations. It is important to recognize that the material base and the ideological superstructure, which together comprise the societal structure, are divided in this diagram for analytical purposes only.
Figure 2.1 is meant to illustrate how the reality of work sometimes coincides with gender ideology and at other times contradicts. A new form of customized gender consciousness emerges, which synthesizes values, beliefs and ideas to coincide with individual reality. In addition, the dialectic relations within both sides of the diagram are also depicted in Figure 2.1. Within the social relations of gender, there are two competing ideologies, one is patriarchal and the other is feminist, and these concepts will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter. Within the social relations of work, there is a tension between class and gender which will be described below.
The Social Relations of Work

The social relations of work have been divided even further in Figure 2.2 below, into two subsections of class and gender. This division serves merely as an analytical tool, not as an affirmation of "dual systems" of power, one capitalist and the other patriarchal. On the contrary, the structure of work is viewed as an integration of both patriarchal and capitalist relations forming one system, that of "patriarchal capitalism". For just as remnants of feudal relations of production were incorporated into capitalism, so were patriarchal relations, in which men exercised economic and social control over women.

Figure 2.2

The Social Relations of Work within Patriarchal Capitalism

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The Social Relations of Work

Class

Owners/Managers  Wage Workers (Company drivers)

Petite Bourgeoisie (Brokers/independents)

Gender

Males  Females

Patriarchal Capitalism
```
The social relations of work within patriarchal capitalism are dialectical, in that class and gender relations sometimes coincide and at other times conflict. Class is defined in reference to the social relations of production, in which owners/managers maintain control of production and the labour-power of workers, and appropriate the products of labour. Within class relations, there is a dialectical relationship between owners/managers and wage workers, as well as between owners/managers and petite bourgeoisie. Within the trucking industry a petite bourgeoisie exists, known as "brokers" or "independent owner operators". (See Appendix A for Trucker Terminology). The petite bourgeoisie in the trucking industry own the means of transportation (their trucks and sometimes trailers), but are obliged to enter into contracts with larger transportation companies, from which a wage or a percentage of the load is paid. In addition, "brokers" and "company drivers" also have competing interests within the trucking industry. Within patriarchal capitalism, gender relations are dialectic, in that at times women's and men's interests coincide and at other times conflict. In addition, men assume more powerful positions in all institutions within society, including the 'public' sphere of work and the 'private' realm of the family.

The Social Relations of Gender

The social relations of gender at the structural or ideological level, as well as the individual level of consciousness, are further demarcated and depicted in Figure 2.3 below. The top half of diagram 2.3 represents the ideological component of gender relations and denotes the competing ideologies of patriarchy and feminism. The bottom half of the diagram illustrates the conscious awareness of gender relations at the individual or group level, and represents at least three types of gender consciousness that can be utilized to explain attitudes and behaviours of both women and men. The three types of gender consciousness and the dynamic relations that occur between the three forms, are therefore, described within an historically specific time frame, that of patriarchal capitalist society at the present time. An
explanation of consciousness will follow later in the chapter, but first, the structural half of Figure 2.3, which has been historically, politically and socially constructed within the economic context of capitalism, will be addressed describing both patriarchal and feminist ideology.

Figure 2.3

The Social Relations of Gender: Ideology and Consciousness

The Social Relations of Gender

Patriarchal Ideology ← Traditional Gender Consciousness

Feminist Ideology

Feminist Consciousness

Customized Gender Consciousness
Patriarchal and Feminist Ideologies

An explanation of patriarchal and feminist ideologies will be outlined in the context of the social relations of work within patriarchal capitalism, using the concept of the gendered division of labour, which includes the separate spheres of the paid workplace and the unpaid labour in the home. Embodied within the gendered division of labour, are specific normative assumptions regarding sexuality that affect gender consciousness and political action, whether it is at the individual or collective level. A very general overview of the gendered division of labour, within a patriarchal capitalist system, will be addressed, beginning with patriarchal ideology.

Patriarchal Ideology

Patriarchal ideology is a set of values, beliefs, attitudes, ideas and customs that have historically and politically legitimized male dominance. Within capitalism, patriarchal ideology has maintained and perpetuated a gendered division of labour that reflects male interests, and consequently, men are the principal benefactors. Patriarchal ideology separates the spheres of paid and unpaid labour, relegating women to unpaid labour in the 'private' domain of the home, while men assume responsibility and control in the 'public' sphere of paid work, politics, education and all other institutions in society, including the family. Within patriarchal capitalism, biological, physiological and psychological reasons are often utilized to justify male dominance, and a whole set of beliefs, ideas and attitudes concerning gender and sexuality are socially and politically constructed. Since these ideas and beliefs sustain and reproduce the gendered division of labour, both in the workplace and in the home, a very brief summary of sexuality will be addressed first.
Sexuality

Stereotypical images of women and men that have been socially constructed over time, and are part of patriarchal ideology, consist of gender characteristics which serve to dichotomize differences between women and men according to biological and psychological characteristics. For example, women are believed to be passive whereas men are viewed as aggressive and assertive. Other images, with feminine traits listed first and masculine attributes second, include: gentle/coarse, weak/strong, submissive/dominant, dependent/independent, meek/boastful, illogical/logical, and emotional/rational. Characteristics such as these form the foundation on which women and men's sexuality are defined within patriarchal capitalism, dispensing power to men through the creation of these images.

Consequently, since women are portrayed as passive and submissive and men are depicted as aggressive and assertive, the male 'naturally' becomes the initiator of sexual encounters and women are chastised and labelled if they invert these roles. At the same time, heterosexual relations are represented as the normal, natural state of affairs, and relations between persons of the same sex are considered abnormal and unnatural. In addition, the myth that women are weak and submissive provides further validation for the traditional, monogamous marriage and nuclear family, in which sexual favours are supposedly exchanged for protection by men.

Delineations of women's sexuality have been a product of men's fantasies and the polarized images of madonna/whore or Mary/Eve have become pervasive in patriarchal capitalism. Mary, of course, symbolizes the notion of the pure, chaste, passionless, domesticated mother; whereas Eve conjures up visions of excessive, insatiable, aggressive sexuality. Ironically, Eve represents freedom, power and control over sexuality, much the same as the privileges accorded to men. However, in a male-dominated structure, men are
entitled and encouraged to express their sexuality freely, whereas women are admonished and labelled as deviant, and are thereby controlled by social sanctions and patriarchal ideology.44

Similarly, beliefs about men’s excessive need for sex and women’s passionless nature have been used as grounds for excusing the double standard in relations between women and men, since men’s biological requirements are not thought to be satisfied within monogamous relationships.46 Under a patriarchal capitalist system, different standards of behaviour are socially sanctioned for women as compared to men. Not only is a woman’s sexuality curtailed, but her reproductive capacity is also controlled and confined within the traditional, monogamous marriage, although this is more common in the past than at the present time. Property ownership, within a patriarchal capitalist system, provides great incentive for controlling women’s reproduction within the confines of marriage, as paternity can be established more easily.48 The social and legal structure of marriage allows the man exclusive legal rights over the child and the woman’s sexuality. Within the confines of marriage, men not only appropriate women’s reproductive labour, but also benefit from an unequal division of labour in the home which is usually justified in terms of psychological and biological differences.

**Gendered division of labour in the home**

Based on biological differences between the sexes, that is, because women are the ones who become pregnant, give birth, and nurse infants, an assumption that it is natural and proper for women to stay at home and nurture children47 ensues within patriarchal ideology. The burden of providing economically for the family has primarily been the responsibility of men, who usually go out into the ‘public’ sphere of production to accomplish this task. These images of women and men are viewed as natural and complimentary within a patriarchal capitalist system.
In addition, the gendered division of labour within the home carries with it normative expectations about appropriate roles for women and men, including what it means to be 'feminine' or 'masculine'. Feminine and masculine images are then tied to appropriate gender roles and tasks. For instance, caring and nurturing are associated with a 'feminine' role of childrearing, and men have been castigated for displaying these attributes. Men, in contrast, are expected to possess the strength, rationality and technical skill to do 'masculine' tasks around the house, such as repairing fixtures, machines and vehicles, and operating machinery like lawn mowers, drills, power tools, etc., far exceeding patriarchal assumptions of women's capabilities. The gendered division of labour in the home, therefore, allows for very little flexibility in terms of gender roles with the likelihood of facing social sanctions from others if a different course is followed by either women or men. Likewise, the gendered division of labour in the 'public sphere' of the paid workforce is riddled with similar assumptions.

**Gendered Division of Labour in the Paid Workplace**

Biological differences continue to play a large role in determining which jobs are classified as women's work and which are considered to be men's work in the patriarchal capitalist workplace. Men have jobs that are considered to be skilled, heavy, dangerous, dirty, interesting and with more physical mobility, and are associated with a 'masculine' image; whereas women's occupations are described as unskilled, light, clean, boring and less physical and are viewed as 'feminine'.

Because men's jobs supposedly involve more technical know-how, strength, problem solving and danger, men are awarded higher salaries than women. The amount of money earned, therefore, also becomes associated with masculinity, in that the man who is capable of supporting a wife and family and fulfilling his role as the primary breadwinner, is thought to be strong, responsible and more of a man than the person who is unable to make a respectable
salary. Being the primary provider also allows the man more control and power within the household, and thereby reinforces the superiority of the masculine image, leaving the woman either economically dependent on him, or else working at a much lower salary.

Within patriarchal capitalism, there is a very real divergence between salary and the type of jobs that women do as compared to men. Women represent a majority in clerical, sales, and service jobs that are low paid, seen as low in skill, and provide little chance for advancement. In addition, women’s jobs, such as primary school teacher and nurse are associated with ‘feminine’ characteristics such as caring and nurturing, and are rarely occupied by men. Other jobs which women perform such as sales clerk and seamstress are considered to be ‘feminine’ because they are thought to be clean and safe, with little heavy lifting and physical strength required.

Physical strength has long been touted as a masculine prerogative and serves as a means of creating a gender hierarchy in all areas of life. Whether physical toughness is shown in the social relations of work, sports, warfare or the home, strength is strictly a masculine quality, and in a patriarchal capitalist society is rewarded both socially and monetarily. Masculinity, therefore, is more valued than the feminine image. At the same time, feminine and masculine images at work are directly linked to corresponding assumptions about female and male sexuality.

Images of sexuality are intimately connected with the gendered division of labour, both in the home and in the workplace. These images can and have been used to justify the domestication of women and the maintenance of power and control by men in the labour force, through the utilization of biological, physiological and psychological reasons. The artificiality of the separation of work from the home, as well as the political and economic division of labour in the workplace have been illustrated by feminists, and have been integrated into feminist ideology.
Feminist Ideology

Feminism is a counter-ideology that developed in opposition to the dominant patriarchal ideology. Feminism is defined, in the most general sense, by Alison M. Jaggar as "all those who seek, no matter on what grounds, to end women's subordination". Feminism, is therefore political, as well as ideological, in its resistance to the dominant patriarchal structure and its emphasis on changing the condition of women. The great diversity of views within feminism will only be alluded to in the next few pages, but hopefully, some of the contributions of liberal feminism, marxist feminism, radical feminism and socialist feminism will be covered within the context of the gendered division of labour, which includes the separation of spheres.

Separate Spheres of Labour

The separation of spheres between the paid workplace and the unpaid labour in the home, that is viewed as natural and unchanging in patriarchal capitalist ideology, is dismissed by feminists as a means of male dominance and a method of keeping women subordinate. Liberal feminists have argued that the separation of spheres is detrimental to women because women are not accorded the same opportunities as men within the legal system, in education, in the family, or in terms of job opportunities. As a result, to counteract discriminatory practices against women, liberal feminists have lobbied for legislative reforms, including equality in employment, job training programmes, educational opportunities, maternity leaves, greater access to child care centres, and abortion rights. Liberal feminists are concerned with equality of rights and opportunities for women within both spheres of life, and thereby choose to work within the existing system.

Radical feminists wish to change the system, and the separation of spheres is seen only as a manifestation of a patriarchal system that oppresses women on the basis of sex and reproduction. The real division is based on sex, and the patriarchal construction of gender ideology is a complex system of male domination, which historically confers power and control
by men over women's lives. Radical feminists often focus on sexuality, reproduction and violence against women, and because of the emphasis on the intimate areas of women's lives, the slogan "the personal is political" was formulated. Radical feminists provide much insight into the manner in which male power is instituted, maintained and perpetuated in women's personal lives through childrearing and sexual practices. The solution for radical feminists is to destroy patriarchy, thereby giving women control over their own bodies, reproduction, and sexual orientation. The separation of spheres is therefore seen as an artificial construct by which men have the power to oppress and control women.

Marxist feminists perceive the separation of spheres as a product of the capitalist system which manufactures divisions between public and private for the benefit of the powerful capitalist class. Marxist feminists look at the material basis of women's oppression. For instance, the labour that women perform in the 'private sphere' of the household to reproduce labour power benefits capitalism as much as their lower paid labour in the 'public sphere' or marketplace. Of particular importance are the Marxist feminist debates on domestic labour, which place household responsibilities directly in the context of the capitalist economy, arguing that women's unpaid surplus labour in the home contributes to profits, in that both capitalists and the State are relieved of providing these services in order to reproduce the labour power of workers. The solution, therefore, is to destroy capitalism, but the problem lies in whether the separation of spheres would be eliminated under a socialist system.

Socialist feminists view the separation of spheres as a social, political and historical construct of patriarchal capitalism, based on both class and gender oppression. Socialist feminists argue against a distinction between 'public' and 'private' labour, and address the material base of women's oppression, claiming that the unpaid work done within the home is intricately connected and intertwined with the paid labour performed outside the home. Similar to radical feminists, socialist feminists also focus on the unequal power relations
between women and men, noting that women can never have equality of condition as long as their reproduction, sexuality and labour are male-defined. In other words, as long as women's work continues to be devalued and women are relegated to assuming responsibility for the majority of unpaid labour in the home, including child care and housework, women and men will not have equal conditions from which to begin to seek employment in the workplace or fulfilment in the world outside the home.

Socialist feminists, therefore, argue that the separation of spheres is not natural and unchangeable, but is a social and political construct that has developed historically within capitalism by men who control the most powerful positions in every institution in society. In order to make change, women must have not only equality of opportunity in the workplace, but equality of condition with men in the home and the workplace. Therefore, the images of women and men that are supported by a dominant patriarchal capitalist ideology must be challenged, including the male-defined version of sexuality that capitalizes on feminine and masculine characteristics to deny women access to high paying jobs and relegate women to specific domestic tasks based on biological and/or psychological gender attributes.

**Sexuality**

Stereotypical gender images generated by patriarchal ideology have been condemned by liberal, radical and socialist feminists alike, but the source of the problem remains different in each perspective. All feminists agree that the notion of psychological differences in 'feminine' and 'masculine' traits represent a distorted view of reality for both women and men. For liberal feminists, gender characteristics such as aggressiveness, rationality, and gentleness are learned through sex-role socialization. Liberal feminists also believe that gender characteristics are not innate, and therefore, can be changed. Therefore, the solution is to work towards an androgenous ideal, where females and males learn and possess both
feminine and masculine characteristics, thereby disposing of stereotypical images of women and men.\textsuperscript{70}

Radical feminists took the idea of sex-roles and expanded this concept to explain why females and males are socialized differently. They argue that the gender images portrayed within a patriarchal system serve to benefit men at the expense of women.\textsuperscript{71} Radical feminists are important for illustrating the politics behind patriarchal ideology, which maintain and perpetuate male dominance through images of women’s sexuality and control over female reproduction.\textsuperscript{72} Radical feminists also challenge the notion of compulsory heterosexuality and traditional marriage that is promulgated in patriarchal ideology.\textsuperscript{73} Some feminists, like Shulamith Firestone, believe that a sex class system exists, based on the asymmetrical power relations between women and men, and that gender distinctions are so pervasive within this structure that they are almost completely taken for granted.\textsuperscript{74}

Socialist feminists, like radical feminists, also look at gender distinctions and the power relations between women and men, but do not see sex as a class. Similar to liberal feminists, socialist feminists argue that gender characteristics are not innate, and like radical feminists believe that feminine and masculine images are historically, politically and socially imposed.\textsuperscript{75} Unfortunately a well-defined feminist version of sexuality is not yet developed to counteract patriarchal images of madonna/whore or Mary/Eve, but feminists agree that dichotomous visions of good girls/bad girls are distorted and severely limited notions of women’s sexuality.\textsuperscript{76} Much of the discussion on sexuality has surrounded a critique of the feminist antipornography movement by socialist feminists.\textsuperscript{77} In this regard, Mariana Valverde cautions feminists against viewing sexuality only as a form of oppression, and she says that sexuality "can also be a terrain for the development of women’s positive and liberating desires, feelings, and ideas".\textsuperscript{78} At the same time, Lorna Weir and Leo Casey argue for a "multiplicity of ethical sexualities" which "allows for a genuine cultural and sexual diversity".\textsuperscript{79}
In the past decade, the topic of sexuality has been addressed by socialist feminists such as Rosalind Pollack Petchesky to argue for women's control of their bodies, sexuality and reproduction. In addition, feminists have also shown how sexuality is integrated into the organization of the paid workplace. And finally, feminists have shown how the gendered division of labour has been maintained and perpetuated socially and historically through images of feminine and masculine sexuality that are linked to tasks both in the paid workplace and the home.

*Gendered Division of Labour in the Paid Workplace and the Home*

Socialist feminists such as Ann Game and Rosemary Pringle argue that there is nothing inherent in a job that makes it masculine or feminine. The distinction between women's work and men's jobs has been socially constructed and redefined over time to maintain these differences as the forces of production change and new technology is introduced. Therefore, there is nothing natural about the gendered division of labour in the workplace or the home. Instead a structure of patriarchal power relations is perpetuated that "gives some men power over other men, and all men power over women". By aligning machines and technology to an image of masculinity, the gendered division of labour is preserved and higher paying jobs remain intact and in the hands of men. Implicit in these statements is that the division of labour should be eliminated, and that women and men are equally capable of performing the majority of jobs in the marketplace and the home and should not be denied those opportunities on the basis of the social relations of gender.

Gender, therefore, represents much more than just the social construction of feminine and masculine images. Gender is one way in which social life is organized. The segregation of women's work from men's work in the workplace and the home is an indicator of how thoroughly interwoven gender and class relations are in a patriarchal capitalist system. Women's work is often low paying and undervalued in relation to men's work which is more
valued and has higher monetary rewards. For socialist feminists, the ultimate goal of pay equity and comparable worth programmes is to redistribute wealth and perhaps equalize power relations between women and men in the paid workplace and ultimately the home.\textsuperscript{99} However, women’s work outside the home has not eradicated the more deeply ingrained, asymmetrical power relations that leave women vulnerable to discrimination, sexual harassment and sexual assault in the workplace; and allows men to violently exercise control over their female partners and children in the home.\textsuperscript{90} Neither has the increase in family income through women’s work outside the home resulted in reciprocal sharing of household responsibilities by men.\textsuperscript{91} To socialist feminists, patriarchal ideology which promulgates the idea that women are subordinate and responsible for housework, child care, nurturing the sick, caring for the elderly, and providing emotional and physical support for the male breadwinner, even when women work outside the home as well, cannot be justified and only serves to make women subservient, susceptible to attack, and burdened with a double day of labour.\textsuperscript{92}

Socialist feminists recognize that the gendered division of labour in the traditional family directly affects the differing participation of women and men in the labour force.\textsuperscript{93} The unpaid work that women perform in the home, including reproductive labour, child care and housework, allows men more freedom to pursue their own careers or enjoy extra leisure time.\textsuperscript{94} Therefore, to alleviate inequities within the nuclear family, a redistribution of responsibility for domestic chores and childrearing, with women and men sharing equally in the household duties, is a necessary condition. In addition, adequate child care facilities are required, not only for individuals in heterosexual relationships, but also for single parents, and people involved in homosexual relationships.

For socialist feminists, the elimination of the gendered division of labour is necessary to equalize conditions between women and men in both the home and the workplace. In addition, patriarchal ideology which subordinates women through gender images and promotes asymmetrical power relations must be replaced with another set of ideas and beliefs that
provide a vision of true equality of condition that will become ingrained in the consciousness of both women and men. At the same time, the social relations surrounding class, race, age, and sexual orientation must also be changed, along with the social relations of gender to affect individual consciousness.

**Gender Consciousness**

The dialectic relationship between ideology and gender consciousness will be addressed in the context of the social relations of work in a patriarchal capitalist society, since ideology is the means by which social relations are maintained and reproduced to sustain and legitimate relations of power within the economic base. A typology of gender consciousness has been constructed using the conflicting ideologies of patriarchal capitalism and feminism as the structural parameters (See Figure 2.4 below).

**Figure 2.4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contradictory Ideologies: Feminist versus Patriarchal</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Feminist Ideology</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>No</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
"Traditional gender consciousness" and "feminist consciousness" represent pure or ideal types, categories into which very few people in society would actually fit. "Customized gender consciousness", on the other hand, has more latitude, in that individuals can select ideas and beliefs from both sets of competing ideologies to justify their material existence.

In a society that has experienced rapid transition in gender relations since the 1960s, there is a high probability that the majority of individuals, both women and men, are experiencing what I have called, "customized gender consciousness". In a capitalist society, where one of the main tenets is individualism and equality of rights, feminist beliefs in equal pay for work of equal value may be hard to deny for the majority of women and men. At the same time, structural conditions such as the lack of available day care, and the pressure of caring for children, may force individuals to revert to traditional arrangements during certain periods in their lives. So "customized gender consciousness" may change over time within each individual. "Customized gender consciousness" also varies from individual to individual, as each person selects a differing number of ideas from each competing ideology. "Customized gender consciousness", therefore, allows individuals some control or freedom to rationalize their lives within the structural parameters of the competing ideologies.

At the same time, "feminist consciousness" may be a reality for profeminist men, who have similar beliefs and values to those of feminist women, and are also struggling for a change in gender relations. At the other end of the continuum, "traditional gender consciousness", which accepts patriarchal ideology as the norm, has been embraced by some women and men as a 'natural' way of life. A brief review of all three types of consciousness is outlined below beginning with "traditional gender consciousness".
Traditiona l Gender Consciousness

As depicted in Figure 2.4, an acceptance of patriarchal capitalist ideology and a rejection of feminist ideology, results in a "traditional gender consciousness". The name "traditional gender consciousness" was chosen because the values, beliefs and ideas of male dominance were transmitted from generation to generation, long before the social and political meaning of patriarchy was elucidated by feminist writers. Tradition also suggests customs and conventions that are followed almost unquestionably over time and ingrained in the consciousness of individuals at the collective level.

Traditional gender consciousness involves an awareness of being biologically female or male, but more importantly, an acceptance of the gendered division of labour, both in the public and the private sphere of work. People with traditional gender consciousness have accepted their biological identification of female or male as justification for the ideologically defined social relations of gender. In other words, these individuals have accepted the gendered division of labour which includes beliefs that women should engage in occupations that are ideologically prescribed as "feminine", such as secretary, waitress, nurse, seamstress, etc.; and place more value on men's work or "masculine" jobs, such as truck driver, welder, engineer, etc.

At the same time, individuals with traditional gender consciousness believe that the responsibilities in the home such as housework and child care are primarily women's duties. These people, therefore, do not challenge the asymmetrical power relations of gender and believe that men have a right to be the "head of the household" and assume dominant positions in the workplace. Because they have internalized these beliefs about the gendered division of labour in the public and private sphere, they do not become politically active to change the situation of women and men in society, differing greatly from people with a feminist consciousness who continually struggle for change in gender relations.
Feminist Consciousness

Feminist consciousness develops out of the contradictions between patriarchal capitalist ideology and women’s lived reality, as well as from beliefs and ideas propagated through feminist ideology. Feminist women and profeminist men also realize the importance of biological differences between women and men, but argue that difference does not necessitate the inequality that is built into the structure of work and gender relations. Individuals with a feminist consciousness believe that there should be equality of opportunity and/or condition for women and men in society. Women and men should have the opportunity to develop their skills and capabilities, in order to work in any job that they are qualified to perform without discrimination of any kind, whether it is based on gender, race, age or sexual orientation. Patriarchal images of “feminine” and “masculine” jobs should be eliminated, along with the gendered division of labour in the paid workplace and the home.

In the home, household duties and responsibilities should be shared equally by both women and men. More importantly, the entrenched belief in male domination and female subordination should be destroyed, leaving gender inequality behind as a part of patriarchal history. Because people with a feminist consciousness believe in the principle of gender equality, they struggle for change, individually in their own personal lives, and collectively in groups that fight for abortion rights, control over reproduction, pay equity, and against discrimination, wife battering, child abuse, sexual assault, and sexual harassment, etc. Political activity and the struggle to eliminate women’s subordination at the collective level is what separates those individuals with a feminist consciousness from the “customized gender consciousness” of women truck drivers.

Customized Gender Consciousness

Customized gender consciousness among women truck drivers will be briefly described in the next few paragraphs, leaving a more detailed account to later chapters. Women truck
drivers have a keen awareness of being biologically female, and are very open in discussions about their bodies and their sexuality. At the same time, many of these women appropriate versions of women's sexuality from patriarchal ideology. However, they do not believe that their gender should inhibit them from engaging in any occupation that they wish to perform. Therefore, they do not accept the gendered division of labour in the public sphere of work, nor do they acquiesce to the ideologically assigned gender images that are associated with certain jobs.

The problem arises when household and child care responsibilities are addressed, since there is great diversity in their behaviour, but not necessarily in their beliefs about the division of labour in the household. Most women truck drivers believe that their husbands should take some responsibility for household and child care tasks and resent not receiving assistance, but the degree to which their behaviour coincides with their beliefs is largely dependent on the relations of power within the household and the arrangements the women have made with their partners. Very few of the husbands/partners have agreed to take responsibility for the majority of the household duties, a few participate equally in household tasks, most "help out" with the responsibilities, while some do absolutely no housework, but perhaps help with child care. Therefore, I have divided the unpaid work inside the home into three sub-categories. These will be called: conventional, unconventional, and egalitarian.

(a) Customized/conventional gender consciousness

Customized/conventional gender consciousness occurs when a person has combined beliefs and ideas from patriarchal capitalist ideology and feminist ideology in the public sphere, but conforms solely to the patriarchal gendered division of labour within the private sphere of the home. The woman, therefore, takes primary responsibility for housework and child care. The term, "convention" was used to suggest custom or tradition, rather than legal precedent.
(b) Customized/unconventional gender consciousness

Customized/unconventional gender consciousness occurs when a person has combined beliefs and ideas from patriarchal capitalist ideology and feminist ideology in the public sphere, but inverts the gendered division of labour in the home so that the man is left with sole responsibility for housework and child care duties, rather than the woman as in patriarchal capitalist ideology.

(c) Customized/egalitarian gender consciousness

Customized/egalitarian gender consciousness combines patriarchal capitalist ideology and feminist ideology in the public sphere, but adopts a feminist version of equal sharing of responsibilities in the home.

Customized gender consciousness is a mixture of carefully selected beliefs and ideas that justify an individual’s existence. Customized gender consciousness among women truck drivers emerges out of the contradictions between the social relations of work, which are based on class and gender, and the social relations of gender, which consist of the conflicting ideologies of patriarchy and feminism. The dynamic and complex social relations that describe how customized gender consciousness emerges among women truck drivers is pictorially illustrated in Figure 2.5 below.

The right hand side of the diagram featuring the social relations of gender or the ideological structure should, in order to reflect the reality of the workplace, be superimposed on the left hand side of the diagram or the social relations of work. At the same time, another ideological structure that depicts the different beliefs and attitudes regarding the social relations of class, should also be superimposed on the social relations of work. This important ideological structure depicting the social relations of class is missing in the diagram, in order to concentrate more fully on the social relations of gender.
Although this model has been constructed to evaluate gender consciousness in both women and men, this research focuses primarily on women truck drivers. A comparative study of women and men in this occupation would be a very interesting and informative undertaking for future research. In the following chapter, the methodology employed to gather information from women truck drivers is elaborated.
Notes


2. Ibid, p. 164.

3. Ibid, p. 159.


5. Ibid., pp. 17-19.


11. Ibid., p. 286.

12. Ibid., p. 286.


16. Ibid., p. 248.


20. Ibid., p.364.


24. Ibid., p.286-287.


26. In *Class Inequality and Political Order*, 1971, Frank Parkin looks at the influence of three competing value systems in order to explain how individuals incorporate ideas from each to bring meaning to their lives, pp. 79-102; Michael Mann also found that values and beliefs are inconsistent in working class individuals and that there is "a disjunction between general abstract values and concrete experience", p. 429, "The Social Cohesion of Liberal Democracy", American Sociological Review, June, 1970, Vol. 35, No. 3; in *Consciousness and Action Among the Western Working Class*, Michael Mann acknowledges that "consciousness is contradictory" and that there is a "distinct lack of fit between the two halves of consciousness", that is class consciousness and economic interdependence with the employer, p. 68; James Rinehart says that although the working class does not have consistent attitudes towards work, they do not totally reflect the dominant ideology either, in "Contradictions of work-related attitudes and behaviour: an interpretation", Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology, Vol. 15(1), 1978, p.11.; and from a social psychological perspective, Jim Cote developed a typology, using the conflict between traditionalist and feminist ideologies, to explain identity strategies among university women, in an article entitled, "Traditionalism and Feminism: A Typology of Strategies used by University Women to Manage Career-Family Conflicts", Social Behavior and Personality, 1986, pp. 133-143.

27. See Frank Parkin, *Class Inequality and Political Order*, 1971, p. 82.

28. The fact that gender consciousness may also vary by race/ethnicity, age, and sexual orientation is acknowledged. However, in order to keep this thesis to a reasonable length, only the social relations of work and the social relations of gender will be addressed.


40. See Mariana Valverde, Sex, Power and Pleasure, 1985, Chapter Two, "Heterosexuality: Contested Ground”.


43. Ibid.

44. Ibid., pp. 8-9.


48. See Christine L. Williams, Gender Differences at Work: Women and Men in Nontraditional Occupations, 1989. Williams look at how femininity and masculinity are perpetuated in two nontraditional jobs, that of female marines and male nurses.


50. See Ann Game and Rosemary Pringle, Gender at Work, 1983, p. 15, who say that "jobs are always allocated as male or female with either direct reference to biology or on the basis of supposed biological differences in characteristics and abilities".

51. Ann Game and Rosemary Pringle describe the sexual division of labour in mass production plants in Gender at Work, 1983, pp. 29-32.

52. See Joan Acker, Doing Comparable Worth: Gender, Class and Pay Equity, 1989, pp. 91-96.

53. See Robert E. Gould, "Measuring Masculinity by the Size of the Paycheck", pp. 96-100, in Men and Masculinity, 1974, Joseph H. Pleck and Jack Sawyer (ed.).


55. See John H. Gagnon, "Physical Strength, Once of Significance", pp. 139-149, in Men and Masculinity, Joseph H. Pleck and Jack Sawyer, 1974.

56. Ibid.


58. See Betty Friedan, The Feminine Mystique, 1983, who also argues that all of society suffers because half of the population's brainpower is not utilized to its full extent.


64. Ibid., pp. 70-72.


67. Ibid., p. 148.


69. See Marlene MacKie, Constructing Women and Men: Gender Socialization.

70. Ibid, p. 97.


78. Mariana Valverde, "Too Much Heat, Not Enough Light", p.31, in Good Girls/Bad Girls: Sex Trade Workers and Feminists Face to Face, 1987, Laurie Bell (ed.).


82. See Ann Game and Rosemary Pringle, Gender at Work, 1983; and Christine L. Williams, Gender Differences at Work: Women and Men in Nontraditional Occupations, 1989.

83. See Ann Game and Rosemary Pringle, Gender at Work, 1983, p.23.

84. Ibid., p. 15-16.

85. Ibid., p.22.

86. Ibid., p.19.


88. Ibid., p.18.

89. Ibid., p.20-21.


92. Ibid.

93. Ibid.


95. The bottom right-hand corner of the diagram was left blank, since it is inconceivable that anyone in society would be without values and beliefs from either patriarchal capitalist ideology or feminist ideology. The concept of ideal types was developed by Max Weber. See Chapter 3, "Max Weber and the Multiple Bases for Inequality", in

Chapter Three
Methodology

You know, I try to tidy up the truck and end up gettin’ my hands dirty ... so it’s one thing that is very unfemale ... for you know, I try to be all female ... I’m soft and I cry, etc. etc. and I bruise easily ... and then there’s the other part of it is ... with us working together, and with me into a male-oriented job ... I try to low-key being a female because I don’t want other guys paying a bunch of attention to me because I’m married ... I’m happily married ... and I don’t want my husband having a problem with me putting him in an awkward position because his wife’s with him ... so when you’re around a lot of other guys all of the time ... when you’re sitting in a restaurant or something like that ... it’s like, they kind of forget that you are female ... ’cause they’re sitting there and they’re making comments about other females that are around there ... but then, because you’re somebody else’s wife, they don’t make any comments about you ... so you do, you kind of lose your femininity ... you become non-sexed ...

Contradictory statements such as the one quoted above forced me to stop and reassess my interview schedule and alter the focus of this research during the very early stages of development. This woman happened to be my fourth interview, but she is, by no means, an anomaly because a maze of contradictions permeates the conversations of women truck drivers. Working within a male-dominated occupation appears to amplify the confusion over what it means to be "female" and "feminine" as opposed to what warrants becoming "unfemale" or "non-sexed". At the same time, a tension seems to exist between the need or desire to maintain gender differences, while at the same time, a longing to be treated as an equal or the same as men in terms of their ability to do the job, and this contradiction had to be addressed very early in the research process.

This research began in January of 1990 and was initially an attempt to examine the social relations of women’s work as truck drivers, with a specific focus on the interaction of class and gender. Influenced by the writings of feminists who believe that listening, conveying
and interpreting what women have to say is the most effective way of understanding the daily experience of women, I decided to gather data through in-depth interviews. At the same time, I recognized the uniqueness of this study. Although there are many articles written about women in nontraditional occupations, there is very little written about women truck drivers. So I felt that the most appropriate technique was to go directly to the source and talk to these women. By the time I had finished my second interview, I realized how salient gender and gender relations were for women who work within this nontraditional occupation. As a result, changes to my interview schedule were made, adding and adjusting questions, in an attempt to comprehend what I perceived to be a form of gender consciousness in this group of women (See Appendix B - Interview Schedule for Truck Drivers).

Although in-depth interviewing of women truck drivers was the primary method of investigation used in this study, as time went by, I found that I had added three other methodological techniques in order to substantiate the evidence provided in the interviews as well as give a more balanced, well-rounded approach to the topic. By the time I was ready to write, I had conducted a systematic telephone survey with Personnel Managers of truck and transport companies, had completed an analysis of census statistics concentrating on the occupation of truck driving, and had been a participant observer for one day in a tractor trailer. All of these methodological techniques will be described in four separate sections of this chapter, leaving the most important and inclusive in terms of information, to the end. Gaining access to women truck drivers and the in-depth interviews will be covered in the last section so that I can complete this chapter with a detailed sample of the women who were gracious enough to share information with me about their lives. The other three methodological techniques, which were carried out concurrently with the in-depth interviews, will comprise the first three sections of this chapter, beginning with the analysis of Census data.
Analysis of Census Statistics

An analysis of census statistics was employed, using the most recent data available, the 1986 Census, to determine the number of truck drivers in Canada and Ontario. Census data from Ontario were specifically examined because all of the women truck drivers who were interviewed were from this province. In order to historically assess the increase in women truck drivers and truck drivers in general, earlier population studies were utilized.

Historically, 1931 was the first year that truck drivers were listed as a separate category in the Census, rather than being conflated into one category with chauffeurs as they had been in the 1921 Census. Data were examined by decade beginning with the 1931 Census through to 1981, and adding the 1986 Census which has the latest information available on truck drivers. Historical data were utilized to provide detailed information on the total number of truck drivers and women truck drivers over time, as well as the percentage of women within the category of "truck driver" as compared to the total labour force.

In addition, historical data were used to calculate percentage increase in total truck drivers and percentage increase in women truck drivers over time in order to reflect social change. However, historical comparisons were done with great caution as category changes sometimes made this difficult and minimum age of the work force changed over time, from ten years of age and over in 1931, to fifteen years of age and over in 1986. In addition, different Census years had varying sample sizes. Therefore, historical comparisons were made only when Statistics Canada had included a comparative analysis that had been adjusted for the differences between Census years.²

More recent Census statistics were analyzed in an attempt to determine the demographical composition of women and men employed in the category known as "truck driver" in both Canada and Ontario. From the 1986 Census of Canada, comparisons were made between women and men in terms of age, marital status, number of children at home, ethnic origin, income, type of industry, and class of worker (paid worker or self-employed workers).³ The
1986 Census provided the most up-to-date statistics on the number and percentage of women and men truck drivers in Canada and Ontario, but it did not include a breakdown of the percentage of companies who actually employed women truck drivers or an estimate of the number and percentage of women within each company. In order to uncover this information a short telephone survey using systematic random sampling was employed.

**Systematic Telephone Survey of Personnel Managers**

A brief telephone survey was conducted at various times during the first three months of 1991, and consisted of interviewing Personnel Managers in trucking and transportation firms. Trucking and transportation companies were selected because eighteen out of the twenty women truckers who were interviewed worked for trucking or transportation companies. The limitation of only surveying trucking and transportation firms is that many large corporations who employ fleets of trucks, such as large department stores, grocery chains, and numerous small businesses were not included in the sample. Another difficulty with the sampling surrounded the fact that only two Ontario cities were surveyed because of time and budget constraints. The city of Toronto and the town of Woodstock were chosen because of their accessibility to the researcher, and their size, in order that I might compare the number and percentage of women truck drivers hired in both a large and a small locality. Although these two cities do, in fact, represent extremes on the continuum, I am hopeful that this sample does adequately represent the actual number of women truck drivers in the trucking and transportation industry within these locations.

The samples were drawn from the Business Directories of the Toronto and Woodstock telephone books. The names of businesses were selected through a process known as systematic random sampling with a random start. A number was chosen at random, from which to begin, and every fifth company thereafter was telephoned and surveyed. A total of twenty-four trucking and transportation companies were phoned from the Woodstock
telephone directory. Only one company refused to answer questions and another firm was inaccessible because the phone was connected to a fax machine which resulted in a screaming noise when called.

The Toronto sample included a total of fifty-nine companies that were telephoned. Of these fifty-nine firms, forty-seven agreed to a telephone interview. Four other companies that were called had numbers that were no longer in service, perhaps reflecting the recession in Canada at the present time. Out of the other eight firms, only two companies refused to comply with my request, and one suggested that a personal interview should be arranged as he would not answer questions over the phone. Two other companies said that all of their hiring was done from another office outside the province. Another two firms were classified as "load brokers" meaning that they arrange loads for other transportation companies but do not hire their own drivers. From the final two companies, one happened to be a firm that leased trucks to transportation companies and therefore did not have their own drivers, and the other did not return the calls that were left on the answering machine.

A total of sixty-nine Personnel Managers were interviewed by telephone, twenty-two from the Woodstock telephone directory and forty-seven from the Toronto business directory. The companies that responded to my telephone interview in both cities ranged from very small family businesses, some with only one or two employees, to very large corporations with two or three hundred drivers. The interviews confirmed the diversity of the industry, as I spoke to people who transported furniture, milk, cattle and livestock, freight, cars and other vehicles, propane and bulk commodities such as cement, lime, and so forth.

The interview questions revolved mainly around hiring policies and whether there were women truck drivers employed in their company at the present or in the past. In addition, inquiries as to the number of women compared to men, their rates of pay, and general questions regarding competence of women drivers in the industry were pursued (See Appendix C -Interview Schedule for Hiring Personnel at Trucking Companies). The telephone interviews
were highly structured, with the researcher rarely varying the order of the questions on the Interview Schedule in order that the survey could be completed as fast and efficiently as possible. Consequently, some telephone interviews were as short as five minutes while others lasted up to twenty minutes, depending on the amount of information these managers were willing to furnish. Most managers were quite accommodating and some were extremely friendly and very co-operative, offering names of women truck drivers that I might wish to interview. From this list of names, four more women truck drivers were contacted and interviewed.

In addition to the telephone interviews with predominately male Personnel Managers, two men truck drivers were also interviewed, as well as a truck driving training instructor who was previously a truck driver, and a researcher from the Ontario Trucking Association. Several conversations between male truck drivers were also overheard at various times during the course of this research, including the day I spent as a participant observer.

Participant Observation

One fortuitous consequence of the in-depth interview process was an invitation to go on a "short run", or a day trip, with one of the women truck drivers. She said that she would make the arrangements with her company and see if she could get one of the largest trucks so that we could really go on a "power trip". When I asked her what she meant by a "power trip", she said, "You’re in a big truck, it’s cool, you’ve got lots of power underneath your hood". Consequently, this invitation was readily accepted and I became a participant observer for one day on an eight hour run.

The opportunity to accompany this truck driver on a run provided me with a chance to observe what it is like to work as a truck driver and to monitor the interactions between this woman and her co-workers who happened to be all men, with the exception of a few women in the office. In addition, I had the opportunity to experience first-hand what it is like to stand
beside the "tractor" and feel intimidated by the size of the vehicle itself. At five foot, two inches, it was all I could do to reach the door handle with my arm raised straight above my head, and the trucker who extended the invitation to me is only two or three inches taller than I am. I learned very quickly to throw all my gear inside the truck before climbing in, and to use the grab handles on the door and side of the truck to pull myself up. Amazingly, after three or four times in and out of the truck, the intimidation began to subside.

Once inside the truck, it became very much like riding in a car despite the fact that I was "riding suicide", or sitting in the passenger seat which did not have air ride suspension. The main difference was the height of the cab and the enormous size of the vehicle. I began to realize what she meant by the feeling of power. This experience also gave me a fresh perspective of what other truckers were talking about when they complained about "four wheelers", or the other vehicles on the road, and what they meant when they said they could see the complete interior of cars, vans and smaller trucks.

Through direct observation and questioning, I was able to gather some rudimentary mechanical knowledge necessary to understand what truck drivers were talking about when they used certain terminology. This trucker demonstrated how to do a "circle check", which includes lifting the hood of the truck and checking the oil, coolants and gauges. In addition, she explained very carefully how to connect the tractor to the trailer at the same time as she was performing this task. My truck driver/instructor was very patient with my endless questions and taught me all about "fifth wheels", the mechanical device on the "tractor" that connects with the "kingpin" on the trailer, including a trip under the trailer in downtown Toronto to show me what she meant. She also encouraged participation as she taught me the proper way to kick the tires to make sure they are solid, and wind down "dollies", which are the legs underneath the trailer that are lowered when the trailer is disconnected and raised before the rig goes on the road. It was a fascinating and learning experience!
In addition to hands-on learning, participant observation also allows the researcher to experience more abstract concepts, such as nonverbal communication and feelings that are often hard to express. For example, I found out first-hand what it feels like to go into a truck stop and be the only two women in the place except for the waitresses. A feeling of "otherness" or difference from the regular customers was manifest in my mind. Similarly, loading docks which are also male-dominated preserves can also be intimidating experiences. At the loading dock that we went into, there was only one male receiver on duty and he tried hard to ignore us. The trucker driver somewhat tolerably found the goods that needed to be transported by herself and we spent about fifteen minutes "hand bombing" or loading the boxes by hand into the trailer. Meanwhile, the receiver maintained a substantial distance between himself and us. The process of ignoring or distancing can also be intimidating, leaving a person with a sense of loss or a feeling of unimportance or non-acceptance.

Aside from assisting this truck driver with loading and helping her carry sacks of mail, I had very little actual participation in her work. The majority of the time I spent observing, following her around, and trying to be as unobtrusive as possible, so that she could continue her work uninterrupted. However, the benefits of having that one day of participant observation were enormous for my research. I was provided with a unique opportunity to connect trucking terminology with the actual reality of the work and the social relations of work and gender in the industry. This made interviewing more meaningful in the long run, since I was able to relate more closely to these women and their work.

**In-depth Interviews with Women Truck Drivers**

The majority of the information collected in this research comes from the in-depth interviews with women truck drivers. Therefore, this final section of the methodology chapter is subdivided into three parts; part one describes the process of gaining access to women truck
Part One: Gaining Access to Women Truck Drivers

At the beginning of this research project, and a year before the systematic telephone survey was conducted, twenty-five trucking companies were telephoned at random in three different cities in southwestern Ontario. This task was undertaken in order to ascertain whether an adequate sample of women truck drivers could actually be accessed. Each company was questioned as to whether they had women truck drivers employed in their firm. Out of twenty-five companies surveyed, nine firms or thirty-six percent, said they had women working as truck drivers, either out of their own terminal or at other terminals within the corporation. From the nine companies that employed women truckers, four firms supplied names of nine women truck drivers who worked for them.

The women truck drivers were then contacted by telephone and an interview was requested, assuring them of confidentiality and anonymity in the finished document. None of the women truck drivers who were contacted refused to be interviewed. A shortage in time rather than a lack of willing interviewees was the reason for keeping the number of interviews down to twenty women truck drivers. All of the women were very friendly and receptive to the idea of being able to tell their story and talk about their work to a willing listener. Developing an easy rapport with these women was not problematic as most were outgoing and straightforward with their answers. However, in a couple of instances, I felt that a few of the women were not telling me as much as I would have liked. Nevertheless, from the women interviewed, six other names were collected and the sample was increased to fifteen women truck drivers through the snowball technique. A sixteenth woman was approached and interviewed during a visit to a truck driver training school, and the last four women truckers...
were added through referrals from Personnel Managers who were contacted during the first three months of 1991, when the systematic telephone survey was conducted.

A total of twenty women truckers have been interviewed for this research. All of the women are from southwestern Ontario except one who lives in southeastern Ontario. However, because the number of women involved in this occupation is relatively small, interviews have taken place in several different locations, from Toronto on the east to Windsor on the west, and as far north as Owen Sound. To protect the identities of these truckers, the names of the towns, cities and villages have not been revealed. Since some of the truckers live in very small communities, mention of the location may make these women easily recognizable and assurance was given at the time of the interview that they would remain anonymous.

Part Two: The Interviews

For the most part, the interviews were conducted at the homes of the women truckers. However, one interview was completed in my own home and another at the university. The average interviews tended to be about three to four hours in length. However, the interview with the woman at the truck driver training school lasted less than an hour since she was on her lunch hour at the time. The longest interview was a marathon session of nine hours extending over both lunch and supper.

The questions on the interview schedule were open-ended, allowing the trucker to expand and explain what she meant in greater detail, and permitting the researcher to probe for more comprehensive answers or explain the question more fully. The format of the interview was semi-structured, in that an Interview Schedule was followed but questions were not necessarily asked in sequential order, allowing the interview to flow more smoothly and giving the trucker more latitude in her answers. All interviews were tape recorded with the exception of the woman at the truck driving training school and notes were made at that
interview session. All interviews were then painstakingly transcribed and transcriptions ranged from fifteen pages to one hundred and twenty-two pages single-spaced. A large chart was then completed using the data collected in order to analyze the information from this sample of truck drivers.

The Sample

This sample of twenty women is destined to thoroughly repudiate the popular image of the homogeneous, stereotypical truck driver, not only because these drivers are not male, but because of the diversity within this group of women. In order to clarify the range of differences between these women, I have provided titles or headings according to demographic and work-related variables. Demographic variables include headings such as age, education, ethnicity, family background, marital status, and number of children. Work-related variables are divided into titles such as management and union membership, company drivers or brokers, length of driving experience, work alone or as a team, full-time or part-time, long haul or short run, and type of truck and cargo.

Demographic Variables

Age, Education and Ethnicity

The sample includes twenty women ranging in age from twenty-three to forty-four. The level of education that these women have attained varies from grade eight through to first year university. One woman has a community college diploma in commercial art, another has a registered nursing assistant diploma, another went to community college to get a certificate as a heavy equipment operator, and another has a community college diploma in robotics as well as her first year of university courses. Most of the women are white, although one trucker said that she has some Native background and another has a Japanese father and Canadian mother.
Family Background

The family background of these women is approached from two opposing points of view; whether there are family members, such as parents, uncles, brothers or sisters involved in truck driving or the trucking industry; or if there is a lack of family ties to the trucking industry. An attempt is being made to connect the social relations within the family to the social relations of work. In this sample, two of the women truckers are working in trucking companies that their fathers own. One woman drives part-time but works as part of management with her two sisters in a family-run company that was started by her father. Another woman works as a dump truck driver in her father’s firm. Three other women have fathers who are or were truck drivers, and two have uncles who are truck drivers. At the same time, thirteen of the women were raised in families with no connections to the trucking industry.

Marital Status

Similarly, as the marital status of these women is recounted, the connections through marriage and intimate relationships with men in the trucking industry will be highlighted. This is to emphasize how closely associated the social relations of gender are to the social relations of work. Only one woman trucker who was interviewed has never been married, although the man that she is currently dating is a truck driver. The one woman who is a widow was married for many years to a long distance truck driver and often went with him on runs before she started driving by herself. Of the two women who are divorced, one was formerly married to a truck driver and the other was not.

Four women are cohabitating and two of them have male partners who are not involved in the trucking industry, although one had previously been married to a truck driver. One woman is living with a man who used to drive truck but has been unemployed for several years, and another woman trucker is living with a broker. The other twelve women are
married, and eight are married to truck drivers. Another two of the married women have husbands who work within the trucking industry, one as a Parts Manager and the other as a dispatcher. Only two women truckers are married to men who are not involved in the trucking industry. In total, twelve women are married, four are cohabitating with men, two are divorced, one is a widow and one has never married, and the vast majority have intimate connections to the trucking industry.

Number of Children

Out of the twenty women interviewed, twelve of them have children or stepchildren. Seven have children under eighteen years of age who are living at home. Five of the women truckers have children who are either over eighteen, have left home, or the children do not live with them and are living with a former spouse. The other eight women have no children. In summary, seven of the truckers have children under eighteen living at home, while thirteen have no children who regularly live with them.

Work-Related Variables

Management and Union Membership

At the present time, nineteen of the women are driving truck. One woman is no longer driving truck and has moved into management in a large trucking firm, but drove a truck for two years prior to becoming Office Manager. Another woman co-manages her father’s trucking firm with her two sisters, but takes every opportunity she can to get back on the road, even if it is only on a part-time basis. In contrast, only three women out of the remaining eighteen truckers belong to a union and fifteen do not. Two of the company drivers are unionized and only one broker belongs to a union.
"Company drivers" or "Brokers"

"Company drivers" are truckers who are employed and paid a wage directly from the firm for which they work. Eleven of the women truckers are currently employed strictly as company drivers and sell their labour-power directly on the market. Another woman works as both a company driver as well as a driver for her common law husband/partner who is a broker. Meanwhile, the woman who recently completed the truck driver training course was, at last contact, working for a broker and running as a team in order to obtain the experience she requires to get a full-time job.6

"Brokers" or "independents" are truckers who own their own trucks and are considered to be self-employed workers. Only five of the women who were interviewed are classified as independents or brokers. Two of the women own their own trucks and run by themselves, while the other three women co-own "tractors" with their husbands and work as a team. These people are petite bourgeoisie or "dependent commodity producers", as Wallace Clement refers to them.7 Although they own the means of transportation, they are obliged to work under contract with large corporations, who either pay them a percentage of the load or pay them mileage to transport various commodities. To summarize, eleven women are company drivers, five are brokers, one drives for a broker, one drives as both a company employee and for a broker, and two have moved into management, with one driving on a part-time basis.

Length of Driving Experience

Within this group of twenty truckers, the woman with the greatest amount of experience has driven a truck for twenty-two years, although she admits that her driving record has been sporadic. Four women have driven truck for one year or less, four have less than five years experience, five have driven truck between five and ten years, two have ten years driving experience, one has driven for twelve years, one has fifteen years experience, and two others have been driving for seventeen years.
Work Alone or As a Team

Eleven of the women truck drivers work alone. Of those who work alone, two are brokers and nine are company drivers. Three women truck drivers work both alone and as a team. Two of these women drive trucks for the same company and most of the time they travel alone but occasionally they work together as a team of two women. Another woman drives alone part-time for a company, alone part-time for her common law husband/partner, and as a team with her common law husband/partner. The other six women drive mainly as a team. Three of these women drive or have driven as a team with their husbands and work as company drivers. One woman drives as a team with a male friend who is a broker. The other three women who drive as part of a team are brokers and co-own their trucks with their husbands. In total, six women truck drivers who were interviewed drive as part of a team with their husbands, partners or male friends; three drive both alone and as a team; and eleven of the women work alone on a continual basis.

Full-time or Part-time

Fifteen of the women are classified as full-time truck drivers, four are part-time and one woman calls herself casual part-time. Out of the four women who work part-time, two of them work two part-time jobs, another takes extra work at certain times by doing long hauls with another woman, and the fourth woman is working part-time with a broker to get experience. In total, fifteen are full-time truck drivers and five drive part-time.

"Long Hauls" or "Short Runs"

"Long hauls" involve spending several days, weeks or months on the road at a time. In contrast, "short runs" usually require two days or less on the road. Seven drivers do only long hauls, ten women do short runs, and three women do both long hauls and short runs.
Type of truck and Cargo

A variety of different types of trucks are driven by these women. Fifteen of these truckers drive a tractor trailer, two drive a five-ton straight truck, one drives a propane truck, one drives a large delivery cube van, and one drives a snow plow for part of the year and a dump truck during the rest of the year. Two of these women have also had experience driving milk trucks and livestock carriers.

The type of trailers that they pull and the commodities they haul are also varied. Two women drive tank trucks and haul commodities such as cement, lime, sand, fly-ash, starch, urea, and propane. Two truckers have experience as "bull haulers", hauling livestock such as cattle and pigs, as well as driving freight. Three of the women pull flatbeds and carry commodities such as steel, lumber, plastic pipes, car parts, machinery, bricks and virtually any cargo that will fit onto a flat surface. One woman hauls a drop deck trailer and hauls steel, lumber and heavy machinery. Three other truckers drive "reefers" or refrigerated trucks and carry foodstuffs, such as beef, vegetables, fancy cakes and cookies, sausages, etc. Seven drive straight freight and pull vans that carry a variety of commodities from crystal, paper, sugar, tobacco, oil, car seats, furniture, luggage, shoes and clothes to shower doors. One drives a large cube van and carries packages and parcels for a courier company, and another driver hauls gravel with a dump truck.

Although the sample is small, I have attempted to access a variety of different types of truck drivers and have conducted extensive interviews dealing with many aspects of their lives. Because of my gender, age, and working class background, I was able to develop a rapport with these women, and gather personal information that may not have been possible with another interviewer. Consequently, I am hopeful that the information in the following pages will reflect the realities that these women experience in their everyday life.

In order to put this research into historical perspective, the next chapter specifically addresses the participation of women truck drivers in the transportation industry. A brief
history of the trucking industry will be outlined. In addition, a quick review of state legislation and training programmes for women who wish to enter nontraditional occupations will be discussed.
Notes


2. The 1951 Census of Canada, *Occupation and Industry Trends in Canada*, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, included a comparative analysis of the years 1941 through 1951; and the 1986 Census, *Occupational Trends: 1961-1986*, Statistics Canada, provided sufficient data for the time period necessary for this research since no women were listed as truck drivers in the 1931 Census.


5. "Hand bombing" is sometimes referred to as "finger printing" as well by some truckers. Both phrases simply mean to load something by hand.

6. An attempt was made to contact this truck driver at the time of writing this thesis, but her number is no longer in service. During the course of the year, I believe she has moved to another location, which unfortunately means that I will be unable to update my information on her ability to find employment as a truck driver.

Chapter Four

Blending Her Story with History:
Economics, Ideology and Social Change

I had to take the course just to prove that I knew how to do it [drive a truck] ... that’s the only reason ... I got through the Manpower Training Course ... yeah, and I applied for it one week ... the fact that there was a woman who wanted to take it ... I had a seat the next week on the course ... that was in 1974 ... so yes, it’s been a really long time, and I was the only woman in the course at that point ... there were no classes then ... then it was ‘Operators’ and ‘Chauffeurs’, and women got ‘Operators’ and men got ‘Chauffeurs’ ... women back then weren’t expected to be able to do it ... and why would I be wanting to do it? ... you know, they looked at me askance ... but no, we’ve been out there for that long, and it doesn’t seem to have gotten much easier in the seventeen years I’ve been doing it ...

I think over the years, men have learned to change because women have gotten into it ... into the men’s work area ... and as long as they showed respect, basically, there’s no reason why we couldn’t ever do it before ... but it was just so male-dominated and women were expected to be home ... and then the money situation’s been coming up ... so gradually, it had to change, and now it has changed considerably ...

Two different perspectives on social change within the trucking industry are articulated by two women truckers who drive alone. One woman has been driving for seventeen years and the other trucker has been a driver for twenty-two years, although on an intermittent basis. Opposing ideas and viewpoints are as unique as the individuals who uttered these comments, and perhaps reflect different levels of discrimination and harassment that they have experienced.

However, the purpose of this chapter is to examine the structural changes that have occurred over time within the economic base and the ideological superstructure, which in turn, have affected gender consciousness among women truck drivers. In the economic sphere, a short history of the trucking industry, including the expansion of the industry and technological
changes, will be addressed. The impact of the dominant ideology, particularly the beliefs and ideas circulated by the state, the media, and employers will be traced as part of history. Interwoven with history will be her story as related by feminists, in combination with documented Census statistics on women truck drivers for the period from 1931 to 1986.

Blending Her Story With History

The First World War brought with it an increased use in motorized vehicles, including trucks. Trucks that had been used during the war were utilized to transport commodities both within and between cities after the war. At this point in history, the trucking industry was in its infancy, and the early trucks of the 1920s provided very little comfort for the drivers. In fact, many of the trucks had little or no suspension systems to absorb the bumpiness of rough roads, were often without windshields and cabs, operated on solid tires, and only reached speeds of eighteen miles an hour. In addition, the infrastructure was very rudimentary, as the federal government had only just begun to supply substantial funds less than a decade previously for road building outside of cities and counties. Truck drivers were forced to travel on dirt and gravel roads and compete with horse-driven traffic. Although the road system was largely inadequate, by 1926, car traffic had increased and the trucking industry continued to grow in Ontario. In 1927, the Ontario government introduced legislation regulating trucks and the trucking industry, with the passage of the Public Commercial Vehicles Act.

However, the Great Depression that began in 1929 had a severe impact on the trucking industry. The movement of commodities was drastically reduced and customers could not afford to pay large amounts of money for transportation. During this period, truck drivers were first listed in the Dominion Bureau of Statistics as a separate category and were not conflated with chauffeurs as they had been in the 1921 Census. As noted in Table 4.1 below, in 1931, there were no women truck drivers, and the total number of male truck drivers in Canada was only 49,992.
### TABLE 4.1

**Women As a Percentage of Truck Drivers and Total Labour Force**

*in Canada between 1931 and 1986*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Number of Truck Drivers</th>
<th>Number of Women Truck Drivers</th>
<th>Women as a Percent of Total Number of Truck Drivers</th>
<th>Women as a Percent of Total Labour Force</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>49,922</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>85,281</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>153,121</td>
<td>393</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>160,574</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>200,490</td>
<td>2,345</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>269,785</td>
<td>6,990</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>266,935*</td>
<td>6,865*</td>
<td>(2.6%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>262,055</td>
<td>7,090</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>274,125*</td>
<td>8,040*</td>
<td>(2.9%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* These figures are based on the 1980 classification for the occupation of truck driver. The numbers directly above these figures are based on the 1971 classification of this occupation.

Similarly in Table 4.2 below, showing the statistics for Ontario, the total number of truck drivers was 21,520 men, which constituted almost half the number of truckers in all of Canada, but no women are listed as truck drivers. In comparison, women comprised twenty percent of the total labour force in Canada and twenty-one percent of the total labour force in Ontario.
TABLE 4.2

Women As a Percentage of Truck Drivers and Total Labour Force
in Ontario between 1931 and 1986

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Number of Truck Drivers</th>
<th>Number of Women Truck Drivers</th>
<th>Women as a Percent of Total Number of Truck Drivers</th>
<th>Women as a Percent of Total Labour Force</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>21,520</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>33,188</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>53,491</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>59,681</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>76,085</td>
<td>885</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>90,835</td>
<td>2,410</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>92,900*</td>
<td>2,585*</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>93,285</td>
<td>2,780</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>96,765*</td>
<td>3,080*</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* These figures are based on the 1980 classification for the occupation of truck driver. The numbers directly above these figures are based on the 1971 classification of this occupation.

Women who remained in the labour force during the Great Depression worked in predominately traditional women's jobs, since a patriarchal ideology, propagated by government, employers and unions, insisted that women, especially married women, stay out of the labour force in order that the jobs could be reserved for men. In some cases, women workers were replaced by male workers, and in the public service a 'marriage bar' restricted
married women from employment. As a result, women were often forced into domestic labour, cleaning other people’s houses, in order to provide support for the family. In fact, Ruth Milkman argues that, in many cases, it was precisely because of the traditional gendered division of labour that women were able to keep their jobs, since men rarely usurped ‘women’s jobs’ even in times of crisis. In any case, to the extent that women remained in the labour force, they did so despite discriminatory practices by employers including the state, because of their material conditions and the need to support the family.

However, just as the proponents of patriarchal ideology had attempted to dismiss women from the paid labour force during the Great Depression, government, employers and unions encouraged women to join the labour force during World War II when the surplus supply of labour power had been exhausted. The message that was promulgated through the dominant patriarchal ideology stressed that women were to be hired as short-term employees, to work only for the duration of the war until the men returned from overseas. In order to entice women into the labour force, the federal government offered incentives, such as changes in the Income Tax Act permitting tax exemptions for wives, regardless of how much money they earned during the war. In addition, government day care was provided for children of working mothers, in conjunction with the Dominion-Provincial Wartime Day Nurseries Agreement.

In addition to incentives to induce women into the paid labour force, women were trained and employed in nontraditional occupations, such as truck driving. Indeed, the Census statistics depicted in Tables 4.1 and 4.2 reveal the entrance of women into truck driving for the first time in 1941, with 109 women truck drivers in Canada and 55, or over half of these truckers employed in Ontario. However, the number of women truckers is very small, with less than one percent of the total number of truck drivers being women.

Even during the war, ninety-nine percent of truck drivers were men and their numbers in Canada increased from 49,922 in 1931 to 85,281 in 1941 (See Table 4.1 above). The
trucking industry itself had become a viable means of transporting goods, as new technology had improved and the productivity of trucking increased because of the larger load size. Refrigerated trucks, tank trucks and cement mixers were available and the trucking industry expanded. During the war, trucks gained in importance for transporting war materials.

After the war, the trucking industry grew even more rapidly, as war surplus trucks were flooding the market, the economy was booming, and increased consumption resulted in a greater need for transportation of commodities. At the same time, a mass strike in August of 1950 by railroad unions proved extremely beneficial to the trucking industry. Trucks moved in to provide round-the-clock, door-to-door, delivery service. The growth in the number of truck drivers in Canada is depicted in Table 4.3 below. The number of truck drivers in Canada increased by eighty percent, from 85,281 in 1941 to 153,121 in 1951 (See Table 4.1 above for actual numbers of truck drivers in Canada). In comparison, the percent change in the total labour force in Canada increased only seventeen percent between 1941 and 1951.

Surprisingly, the percentage of women truck drivers also increased considerably after the war, despite mounting pressure to force women back into the home and out of the paid labour force. However, the actual number of women truckers who remained in trucking was small. Table 4.3 below shows the percentage increase of women truck drivers in Canada. While the increase in women truck drivers was one hundred and seventy-eight percent between 1941 and 1951, the absolute numbers were small, with only 109 women working as truck drivers in 1941 as compared to 393 women truckers in 1951 (See Table 4.1 above for actual numbers of women truck drivers in Canada).
TABLE 4.3

Percentage Change in Truck Drivers as Compared to the Percentage Change in the Total Labour Force in Canada

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percent Change in Total Truck Drivers</th>
<th>Percent Change in Total Labour Force</th>
<th>Percent Change in Women Truck Drivers</th>
<th>Percent Change in Total Female Labour Force</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1941-1951</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>178%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951-1961</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>-16%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961-1971</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>606%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971-1981</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>198%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981-1986</td>
<td>-3% (3%)*</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>1.4% (17%)*</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* These percentages are based on the 1980 classification for the occupation of truck driver. The numbers directly above these figures are based on the 1971 classification of this occupation.

Although the increase in truck drivers in Ontario was not as large as for Canada as a whole, Table 4.4 below reveals a sixty-one percent elevation, from 33,188 in 1941 to 53,491 in 1951 (See Table 4.2 above for actual numbers of truck drivers in Ontario). Compared to the twenty percent increase in the total labour force, the number of truck drivers had increased dramatically in this ten year period. The increase in women truck drivers in Ontario was one hundred and eighty-five percent between 1941 and 1951, but the actual number of women
truck drivers rose from fifty-five in 1941 to one hundred and fifty-seven in 1951 (See Table 4.2 above for actual numbers of women truck drivers in Ontario).

### TABLE 4.4

Percentage Change in Truck Drivers as Compared to The Percentage Change in the Total Labour Force in Ontario

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Percent Change in Total Truck Drivers</th>
<th>Percent Change in Total Labour Force</th>
<th>Percent Change in Women Truck Drivers</th>
<th>Percent Change in Total Female Labour Force</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1941-1951</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>185%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951-1961</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>-22%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961-1971</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>620%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971-1981</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>172%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981-1986</td>
<td>3% (4%)*</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>15% (19%)*</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* These percentages are based on the 1980 classification for the occupation of truck driver. The numbers directly above these figures are based on the 1971 classification of this occupation.

The fact that women remained in a nontraditional occupation, as truck drivers, after the war was truly remarkable, since an intensification of patriarchal ideology occurred, which strongly recommended that women should leave the paid workplace and return to their
household duties. The domestication of women was a high priority for government officials, employers and union members, so that returning veterans would be able to secure employment. Advertising campaigns urging women to resume traditional roles as homemakers, and images of the "happy housewife" were propagated in the media, creating what Betty Friedan called "the feminine mystique". In addition, the federal government changed the tax law, placing a limit of $250 per year that a woman could earn and still be allowed as an exemption on her husband's income tax. The 'marriage bar' that restricted women from working in the public service was also reinstated, and government sponsored day care centres were closed. In C. Wright Mills' terms, day care which had become a public issue during the war, quickly became a personal trouble again after the war was over.

Despite the dominant ideology and the legislation restricting the entry of women into certain jobs, women remained in the labour force, with an increase in the total female labour force, between 1941 and 1951, of forty percent in Canada and forty-one percent in Ontario. (See Table 4.3 and 4.4 above). Women, and in particular, married women continued to join the paid labour force between 1951 and 1961. As Table 4.3 and 4.4 reveal, an increase in the total female labour force of fifty-two percent in Canada and fifty-six percent in Ontario occurred between 1951 and 1961. With pressure from women and unions, the federal government passed legislation calling for equal pay for equal work in 1956.

As for women truck drivers, the expansion of the trucking industry may have enabled them to be absorbed into this line of work. However, between 1951 and 1961 a decrease in the number of women truck drivers occurred. Tables 4.3 and 4.4 depict a decline in women truck drivers, of sixteen percent in Canada, and twenty-two percent in Ontario, during this period. Although the actual numbers are small, falling from one hundred and fifty-seven to one hundred and twenty-three in Ontario, and from three hundred and ninety-three to three hundred and thirty-two in Canada, this decline represents a reversal of the trend that at the same time saw women enter the labour force in great numbers. However, the decrease in women truck
drivers may have a material base in reproduction -- that is, the baby boom of the 1950s may be one explanation for the decline. As will be discussed later in the main body of this thesis, the occupation of truck driver includes long hours, often at great distances away from home. The structure of work makes the job of truck driving very difficult for women with young children, especially when a strong patriarchal ideology is being espoused recommending that women return to the traditional role of mother and homemaker. The decline is especially noticeable since the trucking industry was experiencing great expansion during the fifties.

Technological advances, diesel powered engines, and new truck designs enabled the trucking industry to carry larger loads and become more competitive. The trucking industry had grown from having two percent of the total Canadian freight revenue in 1930 to twenty-five percent in 1960. At the beginning of the 1950s, trucking accounted for ten percent of the freight operating expenses in Canada. However, the expansion of the Canadian highway infrastructure during the 1950s and 1960s played an important part in the growth of the trucking industry. The construction of the Trans Canada Highway in 1962 was a significant event for the trucking industry, since commodities could be more easily and quickly transported across the country. In Ontario a close link between the growth of manufacturing and the expansion of the trucking industry has also been recognized. Increased manufacturing and consumption of goods were also part of the booming economy of the 1950s and early 1960s.

Another profound event happened in the 1960s that affected the consciousness of women truck drivers and women as a whole, and that was the advent of the women's liberation movement. The women's movement and the feminists that led the way espoused an alternate ideology that challenged patriarchal beliefs and ideas. Through mass demonstrations, marches, consciousness raising groups and access to the media, a counter-ideology emerged, with beliefs, ideas and demands for equality of opportunity for women, particularly in education and the workplace. The changing material circumstances of women
were important for understanding how women accepted, rejected or modified competing structural ideologies at this time.

With increased participation of women in the work force, control over both their productive and reproductive lives became major focal points for the women’s movement. Issues of reproduction centred around birth control and legalized abortion for women. Indeed, in 1966, the birth control pill became available in Canada, and in 1969, the sale of birth control devices was legalized by the federal government. Contraception provided women with a new sense of freedom, without fear of pregnancy, but the struggle for more adequate maternity leave and day care continued, in order that women could participate more fully in the public world of production.

In the workplace, feminists concentrated their efforts on eliminating the wage gap between women and men, and fighting discrimination against women in the workforce. One way feminists sought to achieve a more equitable distribution of resources was through broadening equal pay legislation. Another method was to challenge the traditional gendered division of labour and to integrate women into nontraditional, higher paying "men’s jobs". In any event, the women’s movement helped to change the material circumstances of women, as well as attitudes about what constituted "men’s work", and advocated the right of women to pursue these jobs. In fact, during this period, between 1961 and 1971, the number of women truck drivers increased by 606% in Canada, with the absolute numbers rising from 332 in 1961 to 2,345 in 1971 (see Table 4.1 and 4.3). Similarly, in Ontario the number of women truck drivers increased by 620%, from 123 in 1961 to 885 women truck drivers in 1971 (see Table 4.2 and 4.4). In contrast, the percentage increase in the total female labour force was 47% and 51% in Canada and Ontario respectively.

Meanwhile, extensive lobbying by women resulted in the establishment of a Royal Commission on the Status of Women in 1967 to explore what would be required to ensure equality of opportunity for women in all areas of Canadian society. In 1970, the Royal Commission
Commission on the Status of Women published an extensive report. However, a decade later, several reports that analyzed government employment programmes during the 1970s showed little improvement in the status of women.\textsuperscript{36} Despite a shortage of skilled workers, women were highly underrepresented in nontraditional training programmes. For example, women comprised only 3% of the trainees in apprenticeship programmes in 1978-79.\textsuperscript{36} In one programme called Critical Trades Skills Training, which was implemented in 1979-80, in an attempt to alleviate the shortage of skilled labour, trainees were subsidized for two years and employers were reimbursed for fifty percent of the apprentice's wages.\textsuperscript{37} Another government programme introduced in 1980 was called Non-Traditional Training for Women and a wage subsidy of seventy-five percent was paid to employers. However the money allocated to this programme was very small, allowing for only three hundred participants. In addition, Pre-trades Courses, such as the INTO Programme or Introduction to Non-Traditional Occupations, started in 1979 and 1980, were fairly successful in that they attracted more applicants, but accessibility to these programmes was very unequal across Canada.\textsuperscript{38} Because these programmes were perceived as inadequate for challenging the gendered division of labour, feminists and profeminist men began to lobby for mandatory affirmative action programmes instead of the voluntary programmes in order to increase the number of women in nontraditional occupations.\textsuperscript{38} 

On the other hand, one result of these government programmes was a normative effect, in that by encouraging women to enter nontraditional training, attitudes towards women working in traditionally male jobs began to change for both employers and the women involved. During the period between 1971 and 1981, women truck drivers increased in numbers from 2,345 to 6,990 in Canada (See Table 4.1). This represented a 198% increase in that ten year period (See Table 4.3), and the largest in absolute numbers for any decade between 1941 and 1986. Similarly, in Ontario an increase of 172%, between 1971 and 1981, represented the largest increase in absolute numbers from 885 to 2,410 women truck drivers for any decade.
since 1941 (see Table 4.2 and 4.4). However, women represented only 3% of all truck drivers in both Canada and Ontario in both 1981 and 1986 (see Tables 4.1 and 4.2). The province of Ontario has the largest percentage of women truck drivers in Canada. In 1986, thirty-eight percent of all women truck drivers in Canada lived in Ontario, but it is important to remember that in absolute numbers, based on the 1980 classification for truck drivers, 38% is actually only 3,080 women (see Table 4.2).40

Between 1981 and 1986, the growth in the number of women truck drivers slowed down considerably. In Canada, the actual number of women truck drivers went from 6,990 to 7,090, representing only a 1.4% increase (see table 4.1 and 4.3). In Ontario, women truck drivers increased by 15%, and the actual numbers rose from 2,410 to 2,780 (see table 4.2 and 4.4).

Overall, the total number of truck drivers in Canada, including both women and men, declined by three percent between 1981 and 1986 (See Table 4.3), reflecting the economic recession of the early 1980s. These figures are based on the 1971 classification for truck driver.41 Unfortunately, the classification of truck drivers changed between the 1971 Census and the 1981 Census, which makes comparison of the figures based on the 1980 classification more precarious. The figures with the asterisks denote the numbers from the 1981 Census and the 1986 Census which are based on the 1980 classification.42 Using the 1980 classification for 1981 and 1986, the total number of truck drivers in Canada increased by roughly 3% (shown in brackets in Table 4.3). The new classification may include people who drive for courier services and truckers who work for small service industries rather than the transport industry per se.

In Ontario, the total number of truck drivers, both women and men, increased by only 3%, using the 1971 classification, and 4% using the 1980 classification (See Table 4.4). At the same time, the trucking industry was still expanding. By 1985, the trucking industry had control of 60% of the total Canadian freight revenue, as compared to 25% in 1960.43
Trucking had become the dominant mode of transportation in Canada, superseding rail, and air transportation, and by 1990, trucks were transporting roughly seventy percent of all commodities in Canada.\(^4^4\)

A shortage of truck drivers is systematically outlined in a recent study conducted for the Steering Committee of the Canadian Trucking Industry in the spring of 1990, under the auspices of Employment and Immigration Canada.\(^4^6\) This report reveals that the supply of truck drivers has not kept pace with the demands of the rapidly expanding trucking industry. As a partial solution to the shortage of truck drivers, the report targets women as one group of people who could be recruited as a possible untapped pool of labour.\(^4^8\) In an attempt to determine the percentage of companies that actually hires women, a short telephone interview was conducted during the first three months of 1991.

**Trucking in the 1990s**

A systematic, random sample of trucking and transportation companies from Toronto and Woodstock was drawn from telephone directories. A short telephone survey was conducted with Personnel Managers from these firms. In Toronto, forty percent of the managers interviewed employ women truck drivers. However, the number of women in each company is very small, often with just a few women as compared to a hundred men. Sixty percent of companies have no women truck drivers at all. In Woodstock, the results were even more astounding. Only nine percent of trucking firms employ women truck drivers and ninety-one percent have no women drivers.

During the telephone interviews, managers in trucking and transportation companies were asked if they felt there was a shortage of qualified truck drivers or whether they were experiencing difficulty finding good drivers. However, at the time of the interviews, Canada was in the middle of a recession, and as a result, there was a slowdown in the trucking industry, so the answers may not reflect other periods because of the slump in the economy.
In Toronto, 55% of the trucking companies said that they were not experiencing a shortage of drivers. However, 26% of the firms said that they had experienced difficulty finding drivers in the past (one or two years ago) and 15% said that they were presently encountering a shortage of drivers. Another 4% were one or two person companies, and therefore, were not in the market for more drivers. In Woodstock, 41% of companies were not experiencing a shortage of drivers. However, 23% said that they had difficulty finding drivers one or two years ago, and 14% said that they were still looking for qualified drivers. Another 23% were one or two person operations that did not wish to hire more drivers. Despite the recession, 44% of all companies in both cities, who were in the market to hire drivers, reported that they had experienced, in the past or at the present, a shortage of good qualified drivers.

The key word that most managers stressed was "qualified" drivers or people with on-the-road experience. A Parts Manager who was interviewed in the latter part of 1990 said:

I go to the Canadian Fleet Maintenance Seminar every year in Toronto and that's supervisors, like myself ... and this year, the main topic was more drivers, you know ... like we had one session ... anyway, for two and a half hours of the discussion ... we have panels and everything, you know ... and why we're not gettin' drivers and all this ... and it comes right down to the hours they have to work for the money they get, right ... you know, and it's happening ... and it's harder and harder and harder to get drivers ...

At the same time, the job of truck driver has changed over the years, with less emphasis on mechanical know-how and more importance placed on mental and social skills, such as public relations, projecting a positive image, understanding a myriad of government regulations, and coping with mounds of paperwork.47

Paperwork

Records must be kept of the commodities that the truckers are carrying in the form of trip or road sheets listing pick-ups and deliveries, bills of lading, pro-bills and receipts.48 In addition, truck drivers are required to maintain an up-to-date log book of their own personal driving and resting schedules, mileage, fuel consumption, running time, and daily trip inspection
(see Appendix D, "Driver’s Daily Log"). As one woman manager in a trucking company suggested:

Truck drivers are almost secretaries any more ... it’s not like the old norm where if you couldn’t be anything, you were a truck driver ... where now, it takes an educated mind ...

The analogy with a secretary was interesting, in that secretaries are usually associated with a feminine image. At the same time, comparing the paperwork of truck drivers to the skills of secretarial work reflects the changing nature of the job. Indeed, during the systematic telephone interviews with personnel managers of trucking firms, one man suggested that "women are better with paperwork". Most truckers would agree that the paperwork involved with this job has increased in both volume and complexity. Of course, much of the paperwork is linked to the forms that have to be completed in order to comply with the multitude of state regulations.

State Regulations

The truck driver must be aware of state regulations that govern her work, such as weight of load required per axle and how to balance the load, proper licensing and permits, speed limits, parking zones, and a myriad of other rules for driving on public highways. Knowledge of state regulations as well as a variety of other skills is evident in the remarks made by a broker who drives alone and goes stateside or into the United States. She says:

A lot of people have the misconception that a truck driver is brain dead ... so that’s why you’re a truck driver ... I’ve known chartered accountants, policemen, a licensed mortician, bookkeepers, plumbers, school teachers ... they’re drivin’ truck ... when you’re an owner operator, you’re a business person, you’re a bookkeeper, you’re a salesman, you’re a company representative, and at times you gotta be a Philadelphia lawyer ... you get into scales and you can be one hundred percent legal, and if they’re gonna nail your butt, they’re gonna nail it ... so you’ve gotta be quite a bit of a diplomat at times ... and there’s more to it than just pushin’ that thing down the road ...
The concept of being a company representative or public relations person has become very important to managers in trucking companies in recent years, in addition to improving the appearance or image of a truck driver.

**Public Relations and Image**

Many companies are stressing the public relations role of the trucker, in terms of appearance, demeanour when dealing with clients, and courtesy and assistance rendered to the general public. As one parts manager said

Most companies are tryin’ to improve their image out there ... their name is splashed all over that unit goin’ down the road ... and that person behind the wheel represents them ... it does for our company anyway ... it’s the unspoken word ... you represent us ... let’s do the best we can ...  

Uniforms are now common for many companies. At least nine of the fourteen women truck drivers who work as company drivers mentioned wearing uniforms or being fitted for uniforms to be worn in the near future. One woman trucker said

Half of my job is P.R., which is public relations ... if you’re nice to them, they’re nice to you and your company keeps the contract ... at least so I’ve been told ...

Social skills have become part of the job and technical know-how is not as important as it was in the past.

**Technical Know-how**

The division of labour within the modern trucking industry is such that truck drivers are not expected to do major repairs on their vehicles. People with specialized skills are employed within the industry to maintain and repair these large vehicles. As one parts manager says

Any prominent transport company has got a [maintenance] schedule for every unit they have ... like our schedule comes in on the trailers once a month ... tractors, twice a month ... it varies on mileage, but it averages about once a month, okay ... when that unit comes in, it’s started from the front bumper to the back bumper and checked tie-rod and steering components, then your brake components, and everything you can find ... anything that you can find
wrong with that truck, it doesn’t go out until it’s gone [over] ... and any major transportation company has got this maintenance ...

A woman manager also echoed similar sentiments. She said that if a truck breaks down on the side of the road, the truck driver is required to phone in before doing anything to that vehicle. She said

All of our trucks have cellular phones ... if you have a truck phone, well, you’re laughing ... you call us and then we find ... we have books that are directories and they give you all the dealerships just like this in all the different States ... if it’s warranty, you look it up ... if not, it’s just a matter of ... you get out your NTS (National Trucking Service) book and find a place that has repairs ... and none of the drivers can do anything without going through us just ‘cause of costs and expense ... and our mechanic’s an extremely smart engineering-type of person ... he’ll get the guy on the phone and make sure what’s wrong before he authorizes someone else to fix it ... since the equipment’s new ... most of it ... if it does break down, it’s warranty, so it’s not that bad ... with the truck phones and everything else, it’s just a matter of phone calling ...

The price of a new vehicle is enormous and a tractor alone can cost anywhere from $100,000 and up. Given the huge capital investment in this type of equipment, it is economically more feasible for companies to have people who are properly trained doing the repairs. Gone are the days when truck drivers were expected to repair their own trucks, as truck drivers are now expected to possess a variety of social and mental skills in order to adequately perform the job.

Conclusions

The changes over the years in the structure of the work, ideologies surrounding which gender should do the work of truck driving, economic booms and busts, and the growth of the trucking industry itself have all played a part in making the job more acceptable for and by the women who wish to become truckers. The one decade in which women entered the trucking industry in the greatest numbers was during the 1970s, when the conjunction between the economic needs of the industry and the political and ideological movement for change by the women’s movement merged. However, one crucial ingredient is lacking with the structural
argument on social change and that is the individual desire or motivation by women to enter this occupation.

The next chapter will address the individual motivation of women who enter truck driving. The importance of intra-familial relations cannot be underestimated as an incentive to become a truck driver. Therefore, the social relations within the family will be discussed. At the same time the dialectical relationship between ideology and consciousness will also be examined.
Notes


2. Ibid., p. 48.

3. Ibid., p. 48.


5. Figures denoting women as a percent of the total labour force in Tables 4.1 and 4.2, for the years 1931 to 1961, for both Canada and Ontario were taken from the 1961 Census of Canada, *Labour Force: Occupation and Industry Trends*, Dominion Bureau of Statistics. Statistics for women as a percent of the total labour force in Canada for the years 1971, 1981 and 1986, listed in Table 4.1, were taken from the 1986 Census, *Women and the Labour Force*, M. Patricia Connelly and Martha MacDonald, 1990. Data for women as a percent of the total labour force in Ontario for the years 1961 to 1986, as depicted in Table 4.2, were calculated from statistics in the 1986 Census, *Occupational Trends, 1961-1986*, 1988, Statistics Canada.


11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.


14. Ibid.

15. Ibid.


17. Ibid.


23. Ibid.


27. See Ontario Moves By Truck: The Role and Contribution of the Trucking Industry in Ontario, January 1989, John Farrow, Bill Empey and Paul Inglis, p. 2.


30. See *Ontario Moves By Truck: The Role and Contribution of the Trucking Industry in Ontario*, 1989, John Farrow, Bill Empey and Paul Inglis, pp. 3-4.


32. Ibid.


36. Ibid.

37. Ibid.


42. The 1980 classification for truck drivers added two new categories that the 1971 classification didn't include. The two categories were called "Truck Driver, Bulk Milk" and "Other Truck Drivers". The category "Other Truck Drivers" is a residual group for people who call themselves truck drivers but do not fit into the other categories. This could include people who drive for courier services and drive large vans.

43. See *Ontario Moves By Truck: The Role and Contribution of the Trucking Industry in Ontario*, 1989, John Farrow, Bill Empey and Paul Inglis.


45. This study prepared by Price Waterhouse entitled, *Canadian Trucking Industry: Human Resource Challenges and Opportunities* in the Spring of 1990 refers to "the critical problem occupation in the trucking industry" (in the Summary on page ix), examines the reasons for the shortage of qualified truck drivers and attempts to provide solutions.

46. A smaller, more condensed version of this study entitled, *Canadian Trucking Industry: Summary*, 1990, p.(x), also suggested five other sources of recruitment: (1) people from outside the transportation industry who carry goods in smaller vehicles and call themselves truck drivers; (2) people from other occupations within the transportation industry; (3) young people, especially those in high school; (3) people who are in the process of changing careers; and (5) immigrants. Visible minorities were also included in the category with women and their numbers will be addressed at a later point in this essay. Of course women and visible minorities could come from any of the other five categories, but it is interesting to note that they received special categorization.


50. A study entitled *Canadian Trucking Industry: Human Resource Challenges and Opportunities*, prepared by Price Waterhouse for the Steering Committee of the Canadian Trucking Industry, Spring, 1990, pp. 78-80, emphasizes the need to improve the image of truck drivers and increase "professionalism". Personal appearance, sensitivity to customer requirements, and good interpersonal skills are included in the traits that employers are now looking for in new recruits, pp. 30-31, of the study listed above.
Chapter Five
Motivation for Becoming A Truck Driver:
The Dialectic Between Ideology and Consciousness

I don’t really do it for the sake of, you know, proving that women can do it, kind of thing ... I just do it ’cause I wanna do it ... whether I’m a woman or what ... like, I don’t really get involved in that ... no, I’m not a feminist at all ... I mean, I like to have doors opened for me and those deals still, you know ... I mean just because you’re a woman doesn’t mean you can’t do these things ... that’s my big gripe ... just because it was a, you know, quote “man’s job”, for so many years ... it was just kind of assumed that it was a man’s job, you know ... and I think we gotta get away from that because there are more and more women that are having to support families, you know, on their own ...

I’m not there to prove a point ... I just always felt that I could do anything that I felt like doing ... like, I’ve gone fishing and hunting and things like that ... I never thought there was a difference ... my father, though, brought me up ... I went fishing and hunting with him and worked on cars when I was a young girl ...

The message conveyed by these two truckers, and in fact by the majority of women truck drivers, stresses the fact that they do not enter truck driving to demonstrate specifically that women are equally capable of handling the job. Rather, the reasons for pursuing this line of work are stated in terms of their own self-interest, and rarely as an expression of achievement for women in general. At the same time, women who drive trucks have very strong beliefs that women should have the choice to enter any occupation for which they are qualified and which will provide women with adequate rewards, whether monetary or personal. Women truck drivers, therefore, concretely challenge the patriarchal gendered division of labour through their work and in this respect their actions and beliefs coincide very much with feminist beliefs. Conversely, in other instances, boundaries are constructed between feminists
and women truck drivers because the trucker's perception of feminism does not coincide with her own beliefs.

However, more significant influences on a woman's decision to become a truck driver emerge from within the social relations of the family. For women truck drivers, intra-familial relations are very important for integrating women into this nontraditional occupation. Of the twenty women truck drivers who were interviewed, fourteen, or seventy percent of the women, have intimate family connections to the trucking industry either through a father, brother, uncle, husband or close male companion. For others, the influence came at an early age, as fathers taught technical skills to their daughters or mothers showed great independence in thought and action, and these memories remain in the consciousness of women truck drivers. Gender neutral socialization of children, as depicted in the second trucker's comments, is another way that family relations impact on the consciousness of women. At the same time, the demographic characteristics of the women interviewed for this study are complex and overlapping, which complicates the task of determining why some women become truck drivers and others work in more traditional occupations.

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the variety of underlying motivations for women entering truck driving, and to depict the structural constraints, both ideological and organizational, that inhibit women's participation in this nontraditional occupation. At the same time, individual resistance by these women, particularly to gender ideologies, will also be illustrated. In essence, the dialectic relationship between ideology and consciousness will be examined.

In the first section of this chapter, the social relations in the family will be addressed in order to illustrate both the difficulties and the acceptance of women entering this occupation. Images of specific roles for women that are prevalent in patriarchal capitalist ideology are often reflected in family relations and contradict the reality of the paid work that these women wish to pursue. On the other hand, feminist beliefs in equality of opportunity
for women in all areas of the work force coincide with and influence individual attitudes and beliefs within the family and in the consciousness of women truckers. For women truck drivers, a mixture of beliefs and attitudes are taken from both patriarchal ideology and feminist ideology and are integrated into what I have called "customized consciousness". Conversely, differences do exist between patriarchal ideology, feminist ideology and the beliefs and attitudes of these truck drivers.

In the last section of this chapter, the individual motivations for women entering truck driving will be discussed. The majority of women who enter this occupation do so out of self-interest, not because they possess some altruistic notion that they are paving the way for other women or consciously working to make change for women in general. In this respect, women truck drivers differ from feminists who consciously work for change in women’s condition, both individually and collectively in their own lives.2

Differences also exist between the beliefs and attitudes of these truckers and the ideas promulgated by the dominant ideology of patriarchal capitalism, especially surrounding the type of work that women and men are expected to perform. On the other hand, patriarchal beliefs about women’s responsibility for family and household duties sometimes correspond with the beliefs of these women as well as other family members. Consequently, the dynamic process that takes place between ideology and consciousness among women truck drivers will be addressed by examining the social relations within the family.

The Impact of Social Relations in the Family on Consciousness

For the five women who were raised in homes where close relatives, such as fathers, uncles or brothers are truck drivers, explaining why these women became truck drivers is easier than explaining the motivation of those women with no family connections to the trucking industry. However, even when proximity to trucks and social relations in the family are conducive to entrance into this occupation, these realities do not necessarily predicate that
women in these families will choose to enter this career. It is important to remember that a relatively minute proportion of women who were raised in truck driving families become truck drivers. Similarly, a very small percentage of women who are married to truck drivers become truckers themselves, even though nine of the twenty women who were interviewed for this research were either widowed or are currently married to truck drivers. Of the eight women truck drivers who are currently married to full-time truckers, none were driving trucks before marriage, and only one woman preceded her husband into this career. In the majority of cases, the social relations of gender within the home had a direct impact on their decision to enter this occupation.

For women who have family connections to the trucking industry, the social relations between these women and male truck drivers become normalized, in the sense that they understand the rough and rowdy exterior of the men who work within this industry. As one woman commented

Thank god, you know, that my husband was a trucker because all his pals and everything used to come over to the house ... and we used to sit around, and I'd be the only woman in about seven or eight truckers, you know... and the language would be pretty rough, and the subjects would be pretty rough too, you know ... so I got used to it ...

This woman was the only widow in the group of twenty truck drivers, but credited her long-term marriage to a trucker as her reason for getting involved in truck driving, since she often went out on runs with him and enjoyed the work. However, this woman is not unusual. Seven of the eight women who are married to truck drivers give some credibility to the fact that their husbands were driving trucks, and that provided an opportunity for them to learn and become involved, although for some women, a prior interest in this occupation was already there before marriage. As one woman noted

It's something I'd thought about for ... well, like, you know, when you're going through school and that ... you kind of wonder every once in awhile what you're goin' to do with your life and all this kind of thing ... and I always thought it would be kind of neat, you know ... [of] course I never pursued it because I never really had the opportunity ... but see, my husband drives as well and ... I worked in a factory, you see, and he drives nights ... and it was
gettin’ to the point where he was comin’ home when I was goin’ to work, and vice versa, you know, and it just wasn’t the greatest ... see, we’ve only been married for four years ... so I thought, well, I needed the change from the factory anyway’ ... so I thought, ‘Well, what the heck, give it a shot anyway’, you know, ‘and if it doesn’t work out, well at least I could say I tried it anyway ...’

For some women, relationships with male truck drivers provide the opportunity to fulfill a lifetime ambition that has been severely curtailed by the structural constraints of the gendered division of labour and a dominant patriarchal ideology that differentiates images of women’s work from men’s work. Another woman relates a similar story, when she says

It’s something I always wanted to do, and I started going out with a guy who was a driver ... so we went bobtailing one day ... that’s just when you go out with your tractor ... ran up and down through the gears and, no problem, and ... that was on Sunday ... on Monday, I booked the day off work ... second time I’d ever driven one ... brought a trailer empty out of Toronto, and I thought, ‘Well, this is kinda neat!’ ... and I went back to work for about a week and a half ... he popped in and he said, ”I’m leavin’ for Virginia” ... I says, ”Just a minute” ... made a phone call and I says, ”I quit, goodbye” ...

Not all women are as quick to switch to nontraditional work as the woman above. Some women become assimilated more gradually into this line of work and joining their husbands or partners on the road appears to be a way in which they deal with the structure of a job that takes their husbands or partners away from home for extended periods of time.¹ One woman who now drives as part of a team with her husband spoke of the loneliness of being married to a truck driver who is continually away from home. She said

I used to work full-time [as a waitress] and then ... when we moved here, I quit my job to be with my husband ... and I decided that I was going to stay home and be Suzy Homemaker ... and you know, I was really enjoying it for awhile ... and then it kind of got really lonesome because I didn’t know anybody and he was gone five, six, days a week ...

At the same time, the structure of work is different from other types of employment, in that the isolation of each worker in a truck by himself, allows the husband the opportunity to have his wife or other family members accompany him on his runs.² Another trucker tells this story

Well, like I said, my husband was driving ... first of all I started off ... not that I wanted to drive ... it’s just that we’d only been married for less than a year
when he started driving and he was gone like three or four days to a week at a time and we never saw each other ... and just being newlyweds and that, he started asking me to go on little runs with him and I started missing work ... all of a sudden, here I was startin' to miss, you know, three or four days a month, and it wasn't lookin' good on my work record ... and they [the company] needed a team to run some of their loads for them ... they said, "Well, if you like going, why don't you? We'll train you if you wanna run team" ... so I grabbed the chance ... it was the perfect opportunity ...

The opportunity to procure training and to spend more time with a husband or partner is frequently the reason many women who drive as part of a team give for becoming truck drivers. At the same time, women truckers who drive as part of a team with their husbands or partners, often explain their entrance into this occupation in terms of, "it just happened" or "it all just kind of fell in place", but one woman recognized the difference between those women who join their husbands in truck driving and those who don't, when she commented on the fact that not all wives of truck drivers are interested in driving a truck. She said

You know, there's a lot of people that I know that own their own truck and can take their wives ... and a lot of wives are not interested in going in the truck ... they've been there once and that was once too many times ... I would say, probably of the people I know, it's probably seventy-five percent that don't want to be in that ... I think it takes a special type of person to like this job ... there's a lot of guys that couldn't sit and cope with the traffic and cope with the long hours and cope with sitting for four or five hours before you're going to stop ... so it takes a special person, and yes, it would take a special kind of woman to want to do it too ...

This woman is very conscious of the gruelling conditions of work that truck drivers, both women and men, encounter, but also recognizes the uniqueness of working in a job that many other women are not interested in doing, regardless of the opportunity that they have been offered as wives of truckers. This same sentiment is acknowledged by another woman whose mother-in-law is also married to a truck driver and uses her own biases to condemn this trucker's decision to drive. This woman talks about her mother-in-law's beliefs and she says

My mother-in-law, well she thought, 'You're crazy, like I wouldn't do that' ... she thinks that it's just a rough old world out there ... like, you know, you shouldn't be doing this ... they don't like what I'm doing ... it's not their business anyway, that's the way I look at it ... I figure, it's my life and if this is the way I want to live it, then, hey, you're only on this earth once, so go for the gusto! ...
Rather than supporting this trucker, her mother-in-law uses the patriarchal gendered division of labour to chastise her daughter-in-law’s involvement in a nontraditional occupation. In trying to resolve the conflict between the traditional gender consciousness of her mother-in-law and her own consciousness, the trucker justifies her choice in terms of her own needs and desires, which she feels outweigh the beliefs of her mother-in-law. The dominant ideology with its gendered division of labour is so entrenched in capitalist society that patriarchal beliefs and attitudes have been accepted by both women and men. This reality leaves women in nontraditional occupations continually confronting traditional gender images at work and in their private lives.

However, driving as part of a team with a husband or partner often makes the job more acceptable to parents and extended family because this particular arrangement is seen as a way in which to maintain the traditional marriage and family. One woman said that

My Dad was all for it ... my Mom, she liked it when I started driving because she didn’t like to see us ... just being newlyweds and that too ... spending that much time apart ... so she was glad when I started driving ...

Another woman tells a similar story when she says

I keep putting all kinds of crazy things on my parents ... I was born and raised in the city and I used to be a nurse, and that’s the kind of image that they kind of expected of me ... so it was a little bit of a shock for them, you know, that we went into this, but they accept it alright ... I think they stand in amazement that I do it, you know ... and they know too that, you know, if I stayed home, we wouldn’t have much of a marriage ... and that’s the biggest reason why we do it this way is because our relationship is important enough to us that we know that having a weekend relationship isn’t enough, you know ... and often you don’t even get a whole weekend ... it might only be one day if you’re lucky ... and in that day, there’s a lot of other things that you have to accomplish too ... so we do it for the sake of our relationship and they understand that ...

Parents and extended family are more likely to condone women working as team drivers since the hours of work and long separations from their partners are recognized as detrimental to the traditional marriage and family.

At the same time, many women confessed that their mothers have reservations about their occupation and fears about their safety on the road. As one woman commented
My mother, she tells a lot of her friends that, "Oh, my daughter’s a truck driver", but ... sometimes when something happens ... like when that trucker there was murdered out there by Husky there in London ... she was pretty upset ... like it hits her at home ...

Even though this mother worries about her daughter’s safety on the road, she still accepts her decision to be a trucker. However, sometimes other members of the extended family have problems accepting women as truck drivers and a conflict arises. Two women who drive as a team with their husbands recounted stories about their brothers. One woman said

Both my brothers were sort of subtle about it because they thought, you know, ‘This is not something that a woman should be doing ... this is something that a man should be doing’, you know ... so they’re of a different mind where women are concerned, you know ... it’s something that they’d sit back and say, "Well, my wife wouldn’t wanna do that, why would you?" ...

The attitudes of this woman’s brothers reflect the beliefs and ideas of patriarchal capitalist ideology and the segregation of women’s work from men’s work, whereas this woman was challenging the gendered division of labour and her beliefs were in conflict with those of her brothers, whom she said were of "a different mind". Another woman’s brother was more direct and told her exactly where he thought women should be employed. She talks about his opinions below

My brother, he kept saying, "Oh, we got women truck drivers comin’ into our shop all the time ... I think it’s stupid ... I think they should belong to the goddamn typewriter" ... and I’m like, "Who are you to say?", you know ... "Why can’t men type?", you know ... I don’t know whether he really meant it or he was just kinda gettin’ under my goat ... but the other brother he was like, "Go for it, if you think you can do it, go for it!" ...

The conflict in beliefs and attitudes between the traditional gender consciousness of the first brother and the woman truck driver is evident, and although she tried to dismiss his comments as trying to "get her goat", his views undoubtedly affected her consciousness as a woman and as a trucker. She immediately related the support of her second brother, whose ideas and beliefs coincided with hers, and interestingly enough conflicted with the first brother’s comments. Acceptance and support from family members is important for women entering nontraditional occupations because of the impact of patriarchal images that arbitrarily
determine what jobs are proper for women. However, women who are raised in truck driving families often feel less necessity to justify their reasons for being in this occupation.

Women with a family background and close relatives employed in the trucking industry are raised around trucks and the normalcy of operating or riding in these huge vehicles becomes commonplace in their lives. The proximity to trucks reduces the intimidation that often accompanies being around large vehicles. In addition, social relations with male truck drivers also becomes normalized and sometimes preferred when a woman is surrounded by male relatives who are truckers. As one woman whose father, brothers and uncles are all truck drivers comments

I’ve always got along with men, ever since I was a kid ... I’d rather sit in the living room with the men than in the kitchen with the women ...

Access to information regarding real life experiences of truck drivers and their work have been relayed to this woman throughout her life through everyday family relations. Three of the women interviewed have fathers who are truck drivers and two other women have uncles and/or stepfathers who are truckers. Frequently, these women express a fascination for trucks, which contravenes the image of machines and technology as being the prerogative of men. One woman candidly spoke of the relationship between men and large vehicles and the deception that driving truck is a man’s job. She said

Men have always considered it a man’s job because you’re driving big vehicles ... you’re driving a big truck ... and it’s more of an ego thing, I think ... I think a lot of women who started doing it in the first place got fascinated with the truck and everything else, and once they drove it, found that they liked it and that it wasn’t as hard as it looked, you know ... to me, driving a truck, whether it’s straight truck or driving a tractor, you just add a few more gears and you allow for your distance ... when you turn a corner, you allow for your distance going around the corner because of the size of your vehicle ...

Many of the women reiterated the opinion that driving a truck is not as difficult as they were led to believe. Despite the fact that these women are driving thirteen and fifteen speed gear shifts, one woman said, "You get used to it ... it’s almost second nature .. you really
don't even realize after a while that you're doing it". Another woman compared balancing the load in the truck to putting away the dishes. She said

I'm not really all that concerned about the loads in the van ... they seem to be fairly stable, you know ... it's just kind of natural ... like, you're puttin' the dishes away, there's a way to do it and it's done, you know ...

For women the experience of driving a truck makes shifting gears and balancing a load in a trailer as easy as putting away the dishes.

Another common connection between these truckers is a fascination with trucks and many relate stories about the money and time they have spent customizing their rigs, particularly the "brokers" who own their own trucks, but also the company drivers who add extras to the cabs of their vehicles, such as shelves, TVs and VCRs. One woman gave this description of the inside of her truck as she said

The trucks now are like Cadillacs ... our truck ... it has a fridge, stove, sink, microwave, central vacuum, coloured TV, VCR ... it's got everything in it ...

However, it's not just the inside of the truck that is customized. A certain status is attained by adorning the outside of these rigs. Another woman says

It's prestige ... the more lights you put on it, the more chrome you put on it, and stuff like that ... it's no different than a woman decoratin' her house ...

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Truck drivers become very attached and possessive about their trucks. In some cases, the truck becomes an extension of themselves. One woman wanted to send birth announcements to friends and family when she purchased her first truck. She said

It was bought in my name ... that baby [points at picture of her truck] we brought home ... I wanted to send out birth announcements when we got that truck, but he wouldn't let me ... brought her home Christmas Eve afternoon, 1984 ... I felt like I'd given birth, and I got thinkin' ... I thought this was the biggest deal in my life, getting this new truck ... even though it was our truck ... but birth announcements ... it would have fit ... length, weight, colour, picture ... it would have been perfect ...
Emotional attachment to these vehicles is not uncommon. Many expressed discontent if someone else used their truck because every driver shifts gears a certain way and a difference in handling and control can occur.

Some of the women expressed a feeling of power and control when driving such a large piece of machinery. One woman recounted a story that she told to a group of small children during a session in which women in nontraditional occupations were involved. She said to the children

After I check all my gauges and dials, I start up my tractor and I put my hands on the wheel and I get a feeling of power

A feeling of power, along with a healthy respect for the huge size of these trucks, captivates the interest and admiration of these women.

The women whose fathers own trucking companies express an interest, not only in trucks, but in the trucking industry itself. As one woman, whose father owns a transportation company recounts

Since my family had the business going, you know, I couldn’t help but fall in love with it ... yeah, you know, I could have been anything I wanted, but I like the industry and I love the fact of seeing the trucks go down the highway ... I like the big trucks ... driving is a real thing for me ... I just love it! ... I have since I was little ...

This woman and her two sisters currently manage their father’s trucking firm, but her real love is truck driving and she says, "my desire to drive, my love for driving, it just motivates me ... they have a hard time keeping me in here ... give me a chance, give me a drive, I go".

A desire to stay within the trucking industry is also mentioned by another woman whose father also owns a trucking company. Although less interested in driving truck in the beginning, this woman describes her indirect route into truck driving as follows

I worked for my Dad ... I went right from high school into the office and I didn’t like it ... and so Dad says, "Well, why don’t you start drivin’ truck then?" ... and I said, "Oh yeah, I guess there’s nothin’ left to do ... like, if I want to work here, I gotta do somethin’ ... 'cause I wanted to stay in the business and I didn’t want to be in the office and that was the only substitute ... and once I got in there, I didn’t want to get out ...
Having the support of their fathers is one positive incentive, but growing up in a family with roots in the trucking industry also makes a difference in the social relations between the woman trucker and her mother. The support and acceptance by mothers who live with truckers and raise daughters in this environment is unmistakeably beneficial to these women.

One women trucker, who is a company driver, spoke to her mother about switching out of truck driving to another more traditional job because of a slowdown in the trucking industry. She gave this account of her mother’s reaction

Mom knew I was goin’ down there ... I told her I had gone down and whatever ... so two days later, she phones me up and she said, “What are you doing’ about that other job?” ... and I said, “Well, I’m not gonna do that” ... she says, “Oh, thank goodness, I thought you were gonna quit drivin’!” ...

Through experience, this mother had watched her daughter begin driving along with her father at age sixteen and had realized her desire to drive trucks at a very early age. This mother had become accustomed to the structure of the job and having family members out on the road, unlike the trepidation that other truckers’ mothers feel who have no connections to the trucking industry.

Some of the women truckers whose parents have no connections to trucking are hesitant to inform their parents of their occupation. One woman tells this story

I wasn’t quite sure how my parents were going to take all this, you know ... I didn’t tell them for the longest time that I was doing this ... well, then when I came to Easter supper, that’s when I kinda had to say something because I wasn’t going to be there ... or I was going to be late for Easter supper because I had this load ... and well, my mother, she wasn’t too impressed, I don’t think ... you know, I was always kind of a tomboyish type, I guess, you know ... I remember really playing with balls and that kind of thing when I was a kid ... but Mom, she wasn’t really too high on the idea ... my father, he’s a man of few words ... he doesn’t say very much ... he thinks a lot, I’m sure, but he doesn’t say much ... he’s been pretty supportive ... like, he’s concerned about, you know, if it’s a nasty night or something, he’ll call up the next morning and ask how I made out, you know ... things like that ...

Although her father supported her decision to drive a truck, he was concerned for her safety, especially under bad weather conditions. However, a conflict of images surrounding femininity and masculinity is evident in the passage about her mother. Her mother’s traditional gender
consciousness and her beliefs about the type of job a woman should do, were in direct contradiction with this trucker’s image of herself as being “tomboyish” and playing with toys that were connected to an image of masculinity.

However, for other mothers with no connections to trucking, the image of the job as a masculine one is not what concerns them, but rather, their anxiety stems from concern over their daughters’ safety. The structure of the work takes these women out on the highway at night and at very odd hours, leaving them vulnerable to attack and violence. One woman trucker speaks of her mother’s apprehension and her father’s support as follows:

Oh my Dad thought it was great, you know ... “My little girl’s a truck driver” .... especially when I first got my license ... but my Mom, she never liked the idea very much ... she’s like a worry-wart, you know ... she’s always worried about where I’m going, especially when I go to places like New York or Chicago or stuff like that ... you know, I don’t tell her the rotten aspects of the business because she worries enough as it is ... you tell her everything that goes on, well, you just make her crazy, right ... mothers never change ... I mean, when you’re ninety-five, they’re still gonna worry so ... it’s kind of like two separate lives, you know ... like Monday to Friday is life at work ... Saturday and Sunday is life at home ... I talk about it once in awhile at home, but not a lot ...

Although the mother’s uneasiness is understandable, her anxiety is a source of tension between this trucker’s relations within the home and the structure of her work, causing her to consciously lead “two separate lives”. The stress of having to withhold information and not release the apprehensions that go with the realities of life on the road is problematic for some women.

Class differences may also be difficult to cope with for women truck drivers whose parents are white collar professionals. Although both parents genuinely express support, a sense of uneasiness with her blue collar job is noted with one truck driver when she says:

My father was a real estate broker and my mother was a social worker ... so they were, like, professionals ... and to go into this ... I’m sure they didn’t think it was the greatest, but they’re really supportive ... they’re supportive ... my mother comes with me every two or three months for a week ...
In this case, the trucker is conscious of class differences between her parents and herself, and perhaps feels that she has disappointed them. In a conversation about her sister, the difference in status becomes more evident. The trucker says

She's a professional worker, you know, and I don't know how she feels ... she feels it's neat ... she thinks it's interesting ... like, if we go somewhere, she'll say, "Tell them what you do for a living" ... she thinks it's hilarious and things, you know ... but it's always embarrassed me, you know ...

This trucker has been driving a truck for ten years, and when she was asked why she felt embarrassed about telling people about her job, her reply was, "I don't know why I feel embarrassed about it, but I do ... I won't tell". A sense of inadequacy about being respected as an equal in a society where white collar jobs are more valued may be the best explanation for her embarrassment.7

Likewise, for another trucker, class differences have been seriously divisive for relations between her mother and herself. She says

My mother's hardly said two words to me since I told her ... I says, "Got my A license" ... she says, "So, you're gonna be a sleazy, slimey, truck driver, are you?", and that was it ...

In this case, class conflict as well as traditional gender consciousness may have been responsible for the mother's reaction. The trucker's father had been a school teacher, and the mother had always worked within the home in the traditional gender role of housewife and mother. The mother may have perceived her daughter's job as a step downward in social status from a white collar family into a blue collar job. At the same time, this trucker felt that her father, who is now deceased, would have approved of her occupation. She said

My Dad's dead, but he was always braggin' ... like, I just kind of feel that, you know, like he would have liked it ... like, I was the youngest and he always used to take me everywhere with him ... and he used to teach, try and teach me how to fix the T.V. and stuff like that ...

However, it's difficult to know whether her father would have approved when faced with the reality of his daughter actually doing a nontraditional job. One woman who was also raised in a very traditional family had a father who taught her how to rebuild car engines, and yet he
had a very different reaction when she talked about entering a nontraditional occupation. She tells this story

I came from a really traditional household ... and you know, the lady stayed home and looked after the children and everything, you know ... and my Dad went out to work ... and of course, he was the one who brought me up with mikes [micrometers], and verniers and precision tools ... and I remember when I was eighteen, someone offered me a job as an apprentice mechanic and it was on foreign sports cars ... like high compression engines ... and I called my parents ... I called my Dad and I said, "Guess what Dad ... they have offered me a job as an apprentice mechanic and I'm gonna go for it" ... and my Dad told my mother and they both sat me down and said, "Ladies don't become auto mechanics!" ... and of course, like, I said, I was pretty young then, and of course, it was in those days, and I said, "Oh, oh alright", you know, and I turned it down ...

A conflict between actions and beliefs existed within her father. When the time came and this woman was actually ready to enter a nontraditional job, traditional gender beliefs came to the forefront and were used to discourage her from doing this job, despite her interest and technical ability. As she said

I helped my Dad rebuild a Vauxall engine at thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, because my brother kept wandering away when my Dad was showing me valves and tappets and things like that ... but I've had to put up with different problems and things with the sisters and the brother over my life because I've been interested in the more technical things, you know ... I always, from the time I was very small, I've hated playing with dolls ... you know, my mother would put a doll on my pillow when I went to bed ... I'd roll over while I was sleeping and get this little, stiff plastic hand in the eye and think, 'What to hell is this on my pillow for? I'm hurting myself', and I would cast it away ...

The attempt to force traditional gender roles on this woman was very ineffective. At the same time, the contradiction between the traditional gender consciousness of her father and her own conscious desire to work in a nontraditional occupation did not subside over time. When she found a job as a truck driver, the response of her father was very similar. She tells this story

I called him up and I said, "Dad, I've got this job ... I'm driving tractor trailer" ... and he said to me, "Truck drivers are stupid people!" ... now figure that with an English accent ... it comes out even worse ... and I said, "Oh, right Dad" ... and by that time ... like this was when I was with my second husband ... I thought, 'Okay, Dad doesn't live with me and he can tell the family whatever he wants to'... now, Mom will say, "Oh yeah, go for it! I bet you would love that!" ... like Mom started comin' out of her shell when she was sixty ...
Although the father's traditional gender consciousness remained intact over the years, the mother had integrated some feminist beliefs about the right of women to work in a traditionally male occupation.

Four out of the six women who have no family connections to the trucking industry through fathers, husbands, uncles or male companions, were taught technical skills at an early age by their fathers. For these women, the realization that they have an aptitude for technical learning is important because training as a truck driver is expensive and time consuming, and a basic understanding of machinery is very advantageous in this type of occupation. However, in many cases the equipment and knowledge about the mechanical underpinnings of large vehicles have not been readily available to women in the educational system.

One trucker recalled her experience with the public school system that placed girls in home economics classes and boys in shop classes when she was growing up in the 1960s. As a child, this woman had wanted to become a truck driver just like her father. This woman recounted her story of an incident in a home economics class in grade seven:

When I was a little girl, I wanted to be a truck driver ... you can ask my home economics teacher ... I cried my eyes out in grade seven ... just cried my eyes out ... she took me aside and she put her arm around me and she said, "I understand that you don't want to be here, that you want to be a truck driver" ... but she said, "For now, at this time in your life, and because this is the way life is, you have to do this now" ... but she said, "When you're done doing this, you can be a truck driver" ... I said, "Mrs. Pearson, just let me go downstairs" ... you see, I think I liked guys even then ...

Downstairs was where the technical courses were being taught to the boys, and at that time, girls were not permitted to take those courses. Although technical instruction is promoted as being available to both girls and boys in the public education system at the present time, this gender neutral propaganda belies the fact that it takes a very unusual and brave young woman to overstep traditional patriarchal ideology that promotes very specific gender images of what is proper behaviour for women and young girls.
In a conversation with a recently retired high school technical teacher, he also reiterated the problems facing young women in the system. He said that he had convinced a group of fifteen to twenty young women to take a technical course, and he had set up a special class just for them. However, when the budget came into effect, one of the technical classes had to be eliminated and the powers-that-be in administration decided to cut the course that was set up for the young women. Despite the good intentions of this teacher and his firm belief that women should be integrated into technical programmes, the structural constraints of the educational system counteracted his beliefs, which in fact combined feminist ideas with innovative teaching methods.

Access to technical knowledge and equipment builds confidence in women entering nontraditional occupations, and some women who are raised on a farm gain valuable practical experience around large machinery. One woman manager of a trucking firm said that it is easier to train both women and men who have grown up on a farm because they have experience with heavy equipment. She said

If you don’t have any experience with equipment ... you get a farm boy or a farm girl, off a farm, who’s been around equipment, you know, they’re probably more easy to adapt ... even knowing how to drive a standard makes it easier ... if you don’t know how to drive a standard and you come into a transmission like that, it makes a big difference ...

Similarly, a woman trucker spoke about the ease with which her husband, who is also a truck driver, could manoeuvre equipment because of his farm experience. She said

I know my husband, he grew up on a farm ... he could back up wagons and stuff like this ... like backing up trailers wasn’t a big job for him ... but for me ... I didn’t really have anybody that I knew well enough to ask them to teach me, you know ...

At least two of the truckers who were interviewed mentioned growing up on a farm. One woman mentioned being "raised rough and tough". Another woman attributed her excellent physical condition to the work done on the farm. She said

I’ve always been in fairly decent shape ... but as far as strength-wise, I’ve always been ... I was a farm kid, and I was an only child, so I was an independent, strong-willed, strong-backed, type deal ... that’s how I was
brought up ... one hundred and fifty acre farm and an only child, and like, you learn to amuse yourself, by yourself ...

Physical strength and independence were characteristics which she ascribed to her farm upbringing, despite the fact that this woman is now forty-two years old. However, another influence, which she never really gave credit to, was her mother who provided a model of determination and strength of character.\textsuperscript{11} Her mother, who is now deceased, was also in a nontraditional role for her time. She was an assistant manager at a bank, and this trucker refers to her mother as "hell on wheels!". Interestingly enough, this trucker does not think that her mother would have approved of her job. She said, "Mom would have more than likely killed me". Although the similarities between herself and her mother are indisputable, she never really acknowledged her mother’s influence.

However, another woman who was raised in a household with mixed cultures was quick to point out her mother’s influence. For this trucker, her mother is a very strong-willed, independent person who was raised on a farm, and her father is Japanese with very patriarchal beliefs about women and men’s roles in the family. She said

My mother’s a very head-strong person ... she was brought up on a farm with seven boys and four girls, and the girls did what the boys did ... that’s the chores ... you just take responsibility ... if something needed fixing and one of the boys wasn’t available, you’re sittin’ there, get up and do it ... I was brought up being told that if there is somethin’ that you wanna do, whether it’s a man’s job or not, do it, you know ... you don’t wait around for someone to give it to you ... if you want something, you have to go after it ... but I also have ... was brought up with taking care of your husband and taking care of the children and doing the household duties ... my father was Japanese, so I was brought up with a different culture where the man comes and goes and does whatever he pleases ... the wife takes care of the money, the finances, and everything else ... and the responsibility of the house, the kids, the bills, everything ...

Despite the fact that her father’s culture is Japanese, the patriarchal beliefs and attitudes towards work in this home are very similar to other truckers who are raised in homes where both parents are Canadian. For the majority of truck drivers interviewed, the traditional patriarchal gendered division of labour in their parent’s home is the norm, regardless of whether the mother works outside the home or not. However, there is a contradiction in beliefs about
gender roles outside the home between the mother and the father in this family. The strong conviction of the mother that women can do the same work as a man remain within this trucker’s consciousness, but at the same time, a strong sense of responsibility for family and the home, that derives primarily from her father’s influence, is also present and affects her independence.

Independence, as well as responsibility to help support the family, came at an early age for at least two of the truckers who were interviewed. Two of the women mentioned that they had to quit school, one after grade eight and the other during grade 10, to help support the family when their fathers became seriously ill. A third trucker’s father died when she was eight years old, but she was able to finish grade twelve.

A complex mixture of family backgrounds makes it more difficult to determine what motivates women with no family backgrounds in trucking to enter a nontraditional occupation such as truck driving than it does for women with family ties to the trucking industry. Despite the fact that most of the women who were interviewed for this study had links to the trucking industry, they would be the first to admit that only a minority of women with family connections to trucking enter this occupation. In addition, a contradictory and sometimes overlapping set of beliefs and attitudes towards images of feminine jobs and masculine occupations is also present in all of these truckers’ family backgrounds. Although women with family members in trucking may receive added encouragement, the underlying individual reasons for becoming a truck driver were often very similar for truck drivers with no connections to the industry, as were the motivations for those with husbands, fathers, or uncles who drove trucks.
Individual Motivations for Becoming a Truck Driver

Each truck driver furnished three or four reasons for entering this occupation and often their reasons were similar and overlapping, whether they had family connections to trucking or not, and regardless of the fact that they drove alone or as part of a team. Conspicuously absent is any reference to the importance or impact that they are having on changing beliefs and attitudes regarding what has been traditionally considered a "man's job". The reasons they provide are phrased in terms of self-interest. As one woman said

I do it for me, to prove to myself that I can do it ... and I know I can ... I don't do it to prove to anybody else ...

A common tendency to downplay any importance in changing the position of women through the concrete work that they do is present. For many the idea of being a pioneer in this field is pleasantly surprising to them.

For nine of the twenty women who were interviewed, one reason for entering this field of work is that they have always wanted to drive a truck. As one woman with no family connections to the trucking industry states

It was something I always wanted to do ... ever since I was a little kid ... I remember my Dad bragging to people, "Well, my daughter, she's gonna be a truck driver" ... and yet I was one of these little kids, like I'd never wear pants ... my mother made me wear pants or anything, I'd scream blue murder, you know ... I always wanted to be in a dress ... and yet, I don't know, I hit about grade eight and that was it ... I hated school, and that was it, I was going to be a truck driver! ...

Of the nine women who expressed a desire to drive a truck at a very early age, three women have no family ties to trucking and are now driving by themselves; two have husbands who are truckers, but these women are now driving alone; two are driving as part of a team with their husbands, and two have family ties to trucking and have now moved into management in trucking companies.

All of the women say that they love to drive and that the money they are able to earn is a good motivation. Economic reasons are the most common responses given for entering this occupation. Women who have switched from working in low paying, female job ghettos
to truck driving are very conscious of the economic difference which they find astounding. As one woman, who had been working in a factory making credit card machines before entering truck driving, recalls

Well heck, that's more money than I ever saw in my lifetime ... I almost had a fit when I saw my first pay cheque ... I thought, 'Wow, I've struck gold!' ...

Another woman also mentioned the pay differential between truck driving and her previous job as a waitress

I was working three days a week and I can make enough ... if I were to drive by myself, I can make enough in one day for what I was making in three days, you know ... so it's kind of ridiculous! ...

However, the most interesting account of the difference between traditional women's work and the job as a truck driver, in terms of monetary reward and physical mobility, is recalled by a woman who previously worked on a factory assembly line. She said

I was in quality control at a factory ... and as I was working ... I was doing one of the line jobs ... I'd see the straight truck drivers come in ... they'd stick their hands in their pockets and they'd wander through and go sit in the cafeteria ... or they'd pour themselves a coffee and walk around and talk to the girls on the line, with a coffee in their hand ... and I found out these guys are makin' more than we are and we're doing all the work ... and I said, "Shoot, I can do that darn job" ... so I decided then and there, if there was gonna be more money in it than what I was slugging away at here, I was gonna do that job! ...

Money and a perception of freedom, in not being restricted to the repetitious and monotonous movements of the job on the line, made the work of the truck driver appear very attractive to this woman. Similarly, a sense of satisfaction and independence are also mentioned by another woman who says

Well, to be honest, when I get out there and I drive, it's like a natural high for me ... like I love it! ... oh yeah, I just crank my tunes and I just truck and I love it! ...

Once a truck driver gets into the cab of the truck, that work space is her own and the rules and regulations that apply in confined workplaces such as offices and factories are just not there, and this gives the trucker a sense of autonomy or control over her work area. As one trucker says
That’s what’s so good about driving truck is you’re so totally free, you know ... you’re not hung up by “No Smoking” bylaws in the office, you know ...

Another trucker mentioned the absence of human supervision when driving a truck compared to the confines of inside work.

The freedom, yeah, definitely the freedom ... no boss looking over your shoulder ... and being outside ... I couldn’t work inside, I have to be outside ...

Physical mobility and outdoor work are also recognized by men as beneficial characteristics of the work as a truck driver. In a study of male truck drivers, Edwin G. Flittie and Zane P. Nelson say that the truck driver "figuratively epitomizes the mobility characteristics of modern society". Being outside and in motion also allows the trucker the privilege of enjoying the scenery and different surroundings. As one trucker who travels a regular route and works on short runs says

There’s always something different to see ... I mean, like sure, the landscape or whatever, always stays the same ... like, you’re doing the same route over and over again ... it always stays the same ... but still and all, there is always somethin’ different to see, you know ... and I’m not one that can really ... I don’t like really sittin’ still for too long ... I couldn’t sit behind a desk and work or anything like that ... that’s just not my thing ...

At least seven women said that they like to travel and visit different places. The enjoyment and pleasure of seeing the scenery is evident in the following remarks made by a long distance driver. She said

I like plants and I’ve seen bird of paradise growing wild on the sides of the road ... I’d never seen a gold desert ... oh, it was beautiful! ... the white sands of New Mexico ... there’s always something new ...

Truckers who do long distance hauls have the opportunity to travel to many unusual places and see areas that are not the normal part of routine tourist travel. One woman said

I’ve seen more than ninety percent of the people will ever see in their two weeks vacations ... a lot of people will plan for months to go to Mexico for a holiday ... well, I’ve been across the border twice ... just day trips shopping ... and when I see places like that, I wanna see what it would be like to actually live there ... you’ve got the little kid that’s nine years old startin’ to turn grey, out shinin’ shoes and boots for fifty cents and a dollar on the street ... he’s got eight little brothers and sisters at home, and he’s the main support ‘cause the old man’s a drunk ... it’s that type of thing ...
The opportunity to visit and travel and to meet different people is an added bonus of the job. Paradoxically, the travel and isolation of truck driving can be used to consciously avoid people. One woman said that she went into trucking to escape. Although she would not furnish a reason, she said

I wanted to run away from everybody ... so I decided that if I could drive long distance, I wouldn’t be in any one place long enough for anybody to get close to me ...

This trucker is the only woman out of twenty truck drivers who went into trucking for that reason. Ironically, after five years of driving a transport trailer, she is now citing the isolation and loneliness of the job as reasons for wanting to leave truck driving and change occupations.

A few felt that truck driving would be a challenge and would give them a sense of accomplishment, in that there are not very many other women doing this type of work. One woman said

I think that I like driving truck because there is not a lot of women doing it, you know, and I like a challenge too ... it’s very challenging to be out there on the road and to keep this great big, heavy vehicle ... you know you could have twenty-three ton on behind you and you’re keeping it on the road between the lines, and you’re not running anybody over ... I think that was the biggest challenge ...

A feeling of uniqueness, as well as a certain pride in learning the skills that are necessary to perform a job that has traditionally been regarded as a "man’s job" are part of this trucker’s reasons for choosing this line of work. Although this woman is now driving as part of a team with her husband, her husband was the one who left a factory job to join her in this occupation.

Conclusions

The reasons women provide for entering truck driving are complex and overlapping. However, a very significant factor in integrating women into this nontraditional occupation is intra-familial relations. In fact, seventy percent of the women who were interviewed had family connections to the trucking industry prior to becoming truck drivers. The social
relations in the family also facilitate training in technical skills at an early age, provide access to heavy equipment, and furnish a valuable link to the trucking industry itself. A conscious desire by women, at a very early age, to do this job, was expressed by almost half of the women. As well, the monetary and personal rewards are realized by all of the truckers.

Although all of the truckers are conscious of being a gendered minority, very few enter this occupation to intentionally challenge the status quo. Those few women who do so are also the ones who speak most often about the isolation from other women and the real loss of companionship with other women on the job. On a continuum of ideological beliefs ranging from patriarchal to feminist, these women would be closer to feminists than the others, and appear to have integrated more feminist beliefs than the other truckers. At the other end of the spectrum are a few women who adopt many of the patriarchal attitudes towards women and openly condemn and express distrust of other women. But the majority of women have a mixture of feminist and patriarchal beliefs and attitudes that are combined into what I have called, "customized consciousness.

The next chapter will address the impact of training and hiring on gender consciousness. The interconnections between the training techniques of those truckers with links to the trucking industry as opposed to those women who do not have personal ties to trucking will be addressed. In addition, the patriarchal roadblocks constructed by some managers within the trucking industry, as well as the changes in attitudes of other managers, will be discussed.
Notes

1. Mary Lindenstein Walshok looked at the family backgrounds of women in nontraditional occupations. She interviewed women who came from families where they had access to technical knowledge and skills through their fathers. She also found women who had realized independence at a very young age through earning their own money. Being raised on a farm around large equipment was another component in the background of nontraditional women. See Chapter 2, in Mary Lindenstein Walshok’s book, Blue-Collar Women: Pioneers on the Male Frontier, 1981.


4. Not all companies permit their drivers to take passengers or family members with them in the truck. Many companies refuse to allow riders, citing insurance regulations as their reason.

5. See "Judith Foster, Truck Driver", pp. 225-234, in Hard-Hatted Women: Stories of Struggle and Success in the Trades, Molly Martin (ed.). On pp. 226-227, Judith Foster relates her first day of training and her amazement at the size of the ten-wheeler in which she would learn to drive.


8. See Mary Lindenstein Walshok’s book, Blue-Collar Women: Pioneers on the Male Frontier, 1981, as she discusses the importance of acquiring technical knowledge from fathers, pp. 74-81.

9. See Patricia A. Roos and Barbara F. Reskin, "Institutional Factors Contributing to Sex Segregation in the Workplace", pp. 235-260, in Barbara F. Reskin (ed.), Sex Segregation in the Workplace: Trends, Explanations, Remedies, 1984. On page 239, these authors discuss high school programmes and the lack of opportunity for women to learn to use the tools and terminology required for nontraditional work.


13. See Chapter Four, "The Mobile Technical System", in *The Lorry Driver*, 1968, by Peter G. Hollowell. Hollowell's research was carried out in Great Britain and focused on men truck drivers, but the reasons they give as sources of job satisfaction are very similar to those of the women interviewed for this study.

Chapter Six

Getting Around the Roadblocks: The Impact of Training and Hiring on Gender Consciousness

Driver training school was a little bit different than I expected, you know ... like I expected there'd be a couple of other girls there, 'cause it was a school and all, but there wasn't ... I kind of got the idea what the job was going to be like then ...

I went to one place and they told me, "Yeah, sure, we hire women" ... later I found out from one of the guys that works there that they were saying after I left, "We wouldn't have a woman working for us" ...

The isolation of women from other women in truck driving training schools and the workplace, as noted in the first quotation, is not unusual. The skewed ratio of women to men in training schools and in the workplace makes these women more visibly different from other members of the group and directly affects the social relations and gender consciousness of women who wish to enter nontraditional occupations.¹ In addition, difficulty in getting a job, once training is completed, is also a reality for women who have no access to male networks within the trucking industry. The structural roadblocks, including patriarchal attitudes of those in positions to hire personnel, are also evident in the second statement made by a woman who has the necessary qualifications and attempted to seek employment as a truck driver in the spring of 1990.

Nevertheless, during the past two decades there has been a concerted effort on the part of women's groups, the state, and at certain times employers, to recruit women into nontraditional jobs.² Truck driving is one traditionally male occupation that women are now entering, albeit in small numbers.³ However, when women enter a male-dominated industry
such as trucking, they are forced to contend with both class and gender relations that are not eradicated merely by enacting legislation or by providing opportunities for women. At the same time, the effect of class and gender relations on the consciousness of women who enter nontraditional occupations has rarely been explored.

The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to focus on the impact of training and hiring on the gender consciousness of women truck drivers. One objective is to illustrate the dialectic relationship between gender and class, using the hiring of women truck drivers as a criterion. At times, the patriarchal attitudes and actions of owners and managers are in opposition to state legislation, and in many instances, the hiring practices of some managers within the trucking industry are contradictory to their own economic needs. The reluctance to hire women, in turn, makes women conscious of the discriminatory attitudes of these employers. At the same time, there are some hiring personnel who are less reticent about hiring women as truck drivers and hold a mixture of beliefs and attitudes that make entrance into this occupation more plausible for small numbers of women.

The second objective of this chapter is to elucidate the interaction between the social relations in the home and class and gender relations in the paid workplace. On one hand, women truckers are aware that household and child care responsibilities can and do conflict with the structural constraints of work as a truck driver and severely limit women's access to this occupation. On the other hand, the social relations within the family are often crucial, in terms of hiring and acquiring the skills necessary to drive a truck.

Women with family ties to the trucking industry have a personal conduit to other influential males within the structure of the workplace itself, which can be extremely advantageous for a woman entering truck driving. In addition, women with connections to the trucking industry have easier access to training than women who do not have links to the industry. In many cases, family members who are also truckers provide a fountain of general information about the job, as well as the necessary equipment on which to learn and train.
At the time of training, thirteen of the twenty truckers who were interviewed had connections to the trucking industry either through fathers, husbands, male partners, brothers, or uncles. Of these thirteen truckers, ten of the women were trained and received on-the-road driving experience from family members or from people within their network of truck driving friends and associates. The remaining three truckers received both on-the-road training with their husbands or male partners, in addition to attending truck driver training schools. In contrast, all of the seven women with no connections to the trucking industry at the time of training attended truck driving training schools, and received very little on-the-road experience outside their course work. In the next two sections, both types of training will be addressed, beginning with truck driver training schools.

Truck Driving Training Schools

Although most truck driver training schools provide training in the basic essentials, the duration of the course is normally very short and usually quite expensive. The cost of training at a reputable, private truck driver training school is approximately $3,200. At the same time, all truckers realize that a two or three week training course is just the tip of the iceberg. Experience on the road is much more valuable and essential to acquiring driving skill. On-the-road driving experience is the main difference in training between those women who have family members who are truck drivers and those who do not. Women who are married to truck drivers or have family relations within the trucking industry receive considerably more training and practical experience behind the wheel before applying for their Class A license than do the women who act alone.

For the seven women who did not have family connections to the trucking industry at the time of training, all received training which consisted mainly of short, intensive courses at truck driver training schools and very little on-the-road driving experience. Of the five women who completed their training within the last ten years and went to private truck driving training
schools, two of the women went to a daily course which lasted three weeks, one woman went to the States for six weekends in a row, one driver took lessons once or twice a week for a few weeks, and one received a seven hour training course. None of the women reported having any trouble getting into truck driving training schools since these establishments are capitalist enterprises, and as one woman phrased it, "They'll take anybody that'll pay money". The other two women reported taking government sponsored programmes in the 1970s through Canada Manpower.

One of the women who completed a truck driving training course in the 1970s did so in order to provide proof to employers that she was capable of doing the job. She had been driving straight truck for a number of years, but found that when she went in to apply for a job as a tractor trailer driver, the men behind the desk did not take her seriously. She tells this story.

I started driving a straight truck and I decided that, heck, these aren't so bad, I might as well try transport ... and I had a friend start teaching me ... I was riding with him out of Detroit and we were going to Saginaw and Port Huron and places like that ... and it came time for me to leave the area ... I was separated from my first husband and I came to Toronto and I started driving straight truck ... and I thought, 'Shoot, I wanna try transport ...I went in and applied and the three men behind the counter said, "Dispatch?" ... and I said, "No, transport driving" ... and they stood there and laughed at me, and I left without filling out an application ... I was so embarrassed! ... and I had applied to a couple of more jobs and they said, "No, you don't have any experience" ... and I said, "Well, give me a crack at it ... put me behind the wheel and see what I can do" ... and they sort of hemmed and hawed and said, "No, we don't have time" or "The driver trainer's not in", or whatever ... so I thought, 'Fine, the only way to prove that I can do it is to go to George Brown College' ... so I took their four week course ... this was in 1974 ...

This episode was an experience that has remained in the consciousness of this woman for almost two decades and the hurt and humiliation of that encounter are evident when she tells the story. However, her determination to drive tractor trailers remained, and the truck driving training course that was sponsored by the government seemed to be the most logical way to demonstrate her abilities. Similarly, for the seven women who were interviewed, who have
no links to the trucking industry, truck driving training school was the first step in the process of becoming truck drivers.

Six out of seven women reported that they had relatively few problems at truck driving training schools but were conscious of being the only females in the class. Being different from other members of the class has its drawbacks, and although most of the men in the course were fairly decent, a few were problematic. As one woman suggested

Men are generally okay ... every once in awhile you run into a few that’ll ... I don’t know how to put it ... they’re not openly ignorant, but they’ll let you know that it’s none of your business being out there, you know ... like you’re personally taking away a man’s job that they should be doing ...

This trucker received her training in the latter half of the 1980s and the patriarchal attitudes of a few classmates regarding what constitutes men’s work were in contradiction to her own belief that women should be able to do any job they wish to do whether that work has been traditionally classified as men’s work or not. Similarly, another woman who trained for nontraditional work as a heavy equipment operator, but ended up driving a truck in the 1970s, reported her experience with men in her class at a branch of a community college. She said

Well, there’s always a few that are ... they ignore you, you know ... if they start ribbing you and you don’t pick up on it, then they just ignore you ... so it was okay, and after awhile, you know, everybody was friendly ... there was no facilities though, for women ... there was no washroom ...

This trucker used one method of coping with patriarchal attitudes and that is to just ignore the comments, and this strategy appeared to work for the duration of the course. At the same time, she was very conscious of the structural deficiencies that were ignored by those who had planned the course. Washrooms were not available in the area for women, so this woman resorted to using the office washroom. Evidently, it was not just her classmates who had distinct ideas regarding which gender should be taking the course, but also the people who organized and planned the course.

Only one of the seven women experienced antagonism from her instructor and eventually she had to sue the organization to get her money back. The instructor was
deliberately telling her to do things the wrong way. Because this woman was getting on-the-road driving experience through a trucking company at the same time that she was going to school, she realized that what this man was telling her was incorrect. He was also omitting some very pertinent details that she needed to know in order to pass her Class A license exam.

She gave this account of the situation.

Well, the day before my test with him, he hadn’t shown me how to hook and unhook [trailers] ... how to back into a dock ... how to check the oil ... how to do a circle check which is one of the biggest things on a test ... so I got in to see him on the day before my test and I went out with him ... and we started out down the road ... and he said, "Oh somebody’s been showing you how to drive", or something like that ... and I just said, "Well, somebody had to!" ... well, he up and kicked me out of the truck in the middle of nowhere and cancelled my appointments, so I had to sue him to get the rest of my money back from the lessons ...

When asked if the problem was incompetence on the part of the instructor, she replied

No, that was a woman thing ... I found out when I called the Ministry of Colleges and Universities ... they had had several complaints about him ... no woman had ever passed his school ... had never passed their test after attending his school, even after three tries ... again it was just a woman thing ...

For this trucker, consciousness of discriminatory treatment because of her gender resulted in a lawsuit to regain her money and to compensate for the unequal conditions of training. However, she eventually went to another truck driving school and passed her Class A license requirement.

During an interview at Merv Orr’s Transport Driver Training School, a training director told me that there has been an increase in women trainees at the school in the past ten years. He said that "sometimes one out of four students are women but it goes in spurts". The trucks that the students are being trained to operate are ten to fifteen speed. He said that "women have the ability, only it’s a different ability ... their physical strength is not the same as a man’s". At the same time he suggested that when it comes to driving, women often use "more finesse than force". When asked about their overall driving ability, he said, "the women are either really good or lousy". Statistics for the past three years on the percentage of
women in the total student population and their passing rates were sent to me from this transport driver training school and are listed in Table 6.1 below.

Table 6.1

Female Representation in a Truck Driver Training School*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percent of Total Student Population Female</th>
<th>Percent of 1st Time Pass Female</th>
<th>Percent of 2nd Time Pass Female</th>
<th>Percent of 3rd Time Pass Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Statistics were provided by Merv Orr’s Transport Driver Training School. Actual numbers were not supplied, nor were the statistics on men.

As noted in Table 6.1, a very small percentage of the students are women, only 3% in 1987 and 1988 and 4% in 1989. Although the students are given three chances to pass the Class A driving test, the percentage varies from year to year, with 1989 having the largest number (55%) pass their Class A examination on the first attempt. All but one of the twenty drivers who were interviewed for this research passed their driving test on the first attempt. Seventeen of the twenty women have a Class A-Z license, one has a B-Z, and two have D-Z licenses.* The Z endorsement is for air brakes.
Sometimes special treatment is also extended by the truck driving training school to women when it comes to trying out for their Class A license. One woman told a story about being assigned a truck with a hood that was light enough in weight so that she would be able to open it easily during her driver’s test. Although she was grateful that they made certain concessions for her, she was conscious of being treated differently because she was a woman. She said

For the road test, you have to do a circle check which includes checking certain things under the hood ... and I’ve heard it happen that a woman has failed the test simply because she could not open the hood ... the hood is very heavy ... and I remember when I went for my test, they picked a truck that had a lighter hood ... and they made sure before we left for the test that I could open it because they said, "They’ll give you an automatic failure if you can’t open the hood" ...

The fact that the instructors in the truck driving training school had purposely emphasized the difference in strength between women and men made this woman even more aware of their perception of biological differences between herself and the other members of her class.

Another woman was interviewed during her second week of training at Merv Orr’s truck driving training school and she also mentioned the fact that she was the only woman in her class. She passed her Class A-Z licence on the first attempt, despite the tension she was feeling between her desire to learn to drive a truck and her responsibilities as a mother. As a mother, she was undergoing a great deal of stress and worry about her five year old son during the two weeks that she was away from him. She had travelled over a hundred and fifty miles from home, at great expense, to take the truck driving training course. She had left her son with the man she was living with, and had phoned home one night and learned that her son had tried to run away. This woman was one of the seven women who had children at home at the time of training. For this particular woman, the responsibility for child care that is placed on women in a patriarchal capitalist society was, therefore, conflicting with her conscious desire to do this type of work, even at the early stages of training.
The responsibility of parenting was only one reality that differentiated this woman from her male classmates. She also mentioned her lack of experience with large vehicles. She said that she had been "scared and intimidated" by the size of the trucks on the first day of the course. She said that by the second day, the intimidation started to go away and during the second week, the size of the truck did not bother her at all. Like most other women who have not been raised in trucking families or on a farm, her encounters with large equipment or trucks had been very limited before enrolling in the course. Previous employment for some of these truckers included traditional women's jobs, such as short order cook, waitress, and office work, which made these women very conscious of their lack of experience with large machinery. Although a few had already ventured into areas that have been traditionally classified as men's work, such as landscaping, shipping and receiving, and delivering auto parts in small pick-up trucks, their proximity to large vehicles was also limited.

At the same time, the majority of these women were not logging any extra hours on the road since the school was their only source of equipment on which to practice driving. Only two of the seven women who had no family connections to trucking at the time of training, received extra hours of driving experience besides the course time. Both women aligned themselves with male brokers and worked, sometimes with no pay, in order to gain experience. One woman tells this story

I got my license when I was twenty-seven ... so I didn't get a job 'cause, you know, when you have to wait two years to five years for experience ... you just don't plop into a place ... so I was driving around with brokers and learning different things ... some taught me a lot ... so I actually started really when I was twenty-seven ... I started driving with brokers, and I got my real job when I was thirty ...

For other women, a week's on-the-road training with another driver in order to learn the route was the most that was provided, and then they were on their own.
On-the-Road Driving Experience

Family relations play a significant part in access to technical equipment and mechanical knowledge for women who have no relatives in the trucking industry. Four out of the seven women who had no family ties to the trucking industry were taught nontraditional skills by their fathers, and another two women were raised on a farm around large equipment.

Proximity to heavy machinery and knowledge about the mechanical underpinnings of large vehicles are extremely advantageous to women who are training to become truck drivers, but does not approximate the on-the-road practical experience that the women with ties to the trucking industry undergo.

Women who have links to the trucking industry receive additional encouragement and training from the male truck drivers in their families. These women not only log hundreds of miles on-the-road experience before going into this occupation, but some are taught by their husbands, fathers and brothers. Of the twelve truckers who are presently married, three have fathers who are truck drivers. All three of these women were driving trucks before marriage, and two of these three are married to men who previously drove trucks and are now working within the trucking industry, one as a dispatcher and the other as a parts manager. The other woman whose father owns a trucking company is married to a carpenter and her job as a truck driver sometimes causes tensions within her marriage, especially around her hours of work. She works nights during the winter, and when asked how her schedule fits with her husband's routine, she responded very defensively by saying

I gotta work ... like, that's just the way I am ... I was like that when I got married and he knew that ... and that's just the way it has to work ...  

The strain in the relationship may have been acerbated at this particular point in time by the fact that her husband is currently unemployed and she is the sole means of support for the family which includes two children. Two other women who are cohabitating with men also revealed that they are the sole source of support for the family. One woman is supporting a stepson and a daughter, while the other trucker has one grown child who no longer lives with
her. The male breadwinner norm is not a reality in these three family arrangements. As one woman said

For many years ... like with my second husband ... as a matter of fact, when I think back, with my first husband ... the breadwinner, according to Revenue Canada, is the one who makes the most income ... I don't know how many decades I have been the breadwinner according to Revenue Canada ...

Of the other two women who are cohabitating with men, one is married to a truck driver and the other is not. The trucker who is a widow also learned to drive through her husband.

Only one of the twelve truck drivers who was married at the time of training, has no family or marital connections to trucking. However, she was given a tremendous amount of moral and monetary support for training by her husband because he knew she really wanted to become a trucker. She tells this story

When we moved up here ... I got a job up here as a bookkeeper and stuff, and I hated it ... like, I mean, I'd sit there all day and look out the window at the weather, you know ... and wantin' to be outside so bad ... and I just couldn't stand it ... I used to go into terrible fits of depression and stuff ... and one day, I was so depressed ... and my husband just says to me, "Look, we've got a thousand dollars in the bank", he says, "Why don't you go take your truck driving training" ... and I hadn't even thought about it, you know ... it was something that kind of passed by and, you know, I thought, well, it's something I'm never gonna do ... but I'd always wanted to, you know, for as long as I can remember ...

Although her husband encouraged her to learn to drive trucks, she is cognizant of the conflicts between her job and her relationship with her husband. She says

Yeah, we've had a lot of power struggles with it, you know ... especially with the hours ... the hours have been really hard on him because, you know, I'm never home ... like, I didn't get home last night 'til eleven thirty ...

Although this woman does "short runs" on a daily basis, she has to drive for an hour and a half just to get to work, and she says, "I'd leave at four thirty [in the morning] ...I'm in to work for six and I'm usually home by nine, nine-thirty" at night.

Most truck drivers work very long hours, and this is very difficult on home and family life. Therefore, gender relations within the home are extremely important for women who want to drive alone because the job involves long hours away from their partner even for "short
runs", and could entail days or weeks at a time on the road if the trucker is doing "long hauls". Consequently, for women involved in intimate relationships and marriages, the support and encouragement they receive from their partners is extremely important.

Out of the eight women who are currently married to full-time truck drivers, none of these women were driving truck prior to marriage. For the six women who entered trucking as part of a team, the possibility of spending more time with their husbands had a definite effect on their decision. These women expressed great strength in their marital relationships and stressed the fact that they liked to be together as a couple. However, this arrangement can be extremely difficult for individuals, even when the relationship is a strong one. One woman who left team driving with her husband and went into management in a trucking company gave this rendition of what it was like to drive as a team. She said

When we did drive together, I need to be my own person too ... I need to have space of my own ... like, you can imagine what it's like being with someone in a cab of a truck twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week ... and when you're not in the truck, you're at home together ... you know, that's a hard situation to be in ...

Her husband is still driving long distance but by himself. She now sees him only once or twice a week. She says

He leaves Sunday ... he leaves in the afternoon usually, and if he's home, it's maybe on a Wednesday or ... Tuesday or Wednesday night ... and that's it, and he's gone again ... and most of the time, he's not home before Friday, you know, nine, ten, eleven o'clock ... so you lose Friday night, you know ... you have Saturday during the day and Saturday evening ... that's it ...

For many women who have become long distance drivers with their husbands, six days a week on the road is not unusual. Whether their husbands' motives, when asking their wives to join them, were self-serving or not is hard to say without interviewing male truck drivers. For men whose wives have become part of a team, they have additional companionship and an extra driver that can break the monotony of being on the road for several days at a time. At the same time, the women who are working as part of a team are sharing the driving, enjoying the travelling and feeling a sense of accomplishment. Consequently, when the
husband decides that he does not want to drive long distance any more, his decision places the woman in a precarious position. Another trucker tells this story.

He decided we didn't wanna run team any more ... I would be glad to do it ... I like doing it, but he didn't wanna do it any more ... he just got tired of being gone all the time ... he wanted more of a home life, you know ... and I don't know what he expected because they didn't have that many positions open for city work and I wasn't high enough in seniority to get over top of anybody else, which he could ... and I said, "I'm not gonna quit driving just because you don't wanna run team any more" ... I don't think I'd ever want to go back to a factory any more ...

For this woman, who was hired to run as a team with her husband, his decision caused a real dilemma in her life. The thought of going back to a low paying, monotonous, factory job did not appeal to her. In addition, a common theme that many of the women expressed during the interviews was that trucking "gets into your blood", especially those truckers who do long hauls. As a result, she takes every opportunity she can to do long hauls with another woman from the same company, but the majority of time, she works part-time and drives alone, doing short runs, for the same trucking firm. Although the company that hired her gave her some basic training, the majority of her training was on-the-road experience, driving with her husband.

The training that the husbands provide to their wives is often very rigorous. One woman recounted this story about how her husband taught her to back up the truck.

He used to make me park between two rows of vehicles with only a four inch clearance on either side ... he's always had a lot of vehicles around ... I used to have to back in using my mirrors only and leave a space where I'd have to roll the window down to get out ...

Backing up a tractor trailer is probably one of the hardest skills to learn when driving one of these rigs. This woman was trained on the premise that she would be driving alone, and as a result, is now very confident about her ability in this area.

However, in situations where women join their husbands as part of a team, husbands often take the dominant role in the team, especially if the husband has been driving for a longer length of time than the wife, which is normally the case. Lembright and Riemer suggest that
wives in teams are "almost always relegated to the subordinate status of second seat". For some women, this arrangement is fine. As one team driver said

> I've still left the most of it to my husband ... maybe it would be different if I were out there doing it myself and knowing I was one hundred percent in control ... my husband's the one in charge ... you know, bad weather or like the heavier stuff ... so I revert back to being a female ...

For this woman, reverting to a female role means having less control over the work process than her husband. She has assumed a subordinate role to that of her husband as part of being "female", and has thereby acquiesced to patriarchal beliefs that men should assume the dominant role.

By assuming a secondary position in the work process, these women are sometimes denied training in some of the more crucial aspects of the job, such as backing up the truck. Another team driver says

> I still have trouble backing up ... but see, anything we really do like that, my husband usually does that part ... like, I don’t get really involved in the backing up ...

As long as the husband is with them, learning to back up seems irrelevant, but this can cause difficulties if the woman decides to drive by herself. In this situation, the arrangement that the husband has implemented is frustrating. One woman who used to drive as part of a team with her husband, but currently drives alone, said

> I never really got a lot of experience backing it in because I was always told I would learn later ... he would teach me later ... and then we’d get somewhere and it was quicker for him to do it, you know, "You can try next time" ... and I really never learned ...

For many women who drive as part of a team, the husband automatically takes control and assumes the dominant role. Another woman expressed her discontent with this arrangement when she said

> If you’re running with a man, the man always takes the responsibility whether you’re capable or not ... I find that with mine when he makes the decisions of where to stop, which route to go, you know ... when you stop to fuel the truck, he’ll do it ... you can’t get all the experience and if you’re gonna be pushy, then they don’t want you ... we have friends whose wives do go with them ... so they don’t really have any training ... and the men don’t want them
to learn too much ... they don’t want the women to have to drive by themselves, you know ... like, they don’t want them to learn how to back up ...

The congruency of male dominance and control over women’s work extends from the home into the workplace. In some cases, the woman in a truck driving team has to consciously assert herself at the beginning of training just to be taught to drive properly.

The gender politics\textsuperscript{10} that occur between husband and wife during training are sometimes intense, but at other times often quite humorous. One trucker tells this story

I remember when he was teaching me how to drive the school bus ... he grabbed the shift and he was trying to shift it, and that made me mad ... I just pulled the bus over and I said, "Okay, you want to drive it, you drive it yourself!" ... and I got off the bus and I started walking ...

Resistance to dominance by husbands occurs with wives who have very strong personalities and these women make it known very early in training that their husband’s teaching methods are unsatisfactory. One woman forced her husband to teach her to drive properly. In the beginning he was just switching seats with her as they were going down the highway. Apparently, this method is commonly used when changing drivers. The person who is driving gets the truck up to cruising gear and then pulls the throttle out and the other driver slides into the seat. This woman was not content with that arrangement and she was quick to let him know. She said

When we first started, we didn’t even stop the truck ... all he does is put the seat right down to the floor ....then I slide in underneath of him ... and I’m thinking, like if anything ever happened, like I had to stop this thing ... sure you could step on the brake, but you have to know how to shift too ... so I said, "if you want me to drive this thing, it’s either teach me right or I’m not doing it any more" ...

Having a husband as a trainer has its advantages, in that these truckers have a familiar person beside them and they may not feel as nervous, but it also has disadvantages, in that these women may receive training that is uneven. For instance, the woman may learn one aspect of the job very well, such as driving the truck itself. However, in other areas, such as backing up or balancing loads, etc., a wife’s training may be insufficient, depending on the
relations between herself and her husband. In many cases though, a woman who is married to a trucker has an advantage because she has the time and opportunity to learn the intricacies of handling the truck through day-to-day contact with a person who knows the secrets of the trade. One woman whose husband taught her a few extras, that can only be grasped through experience, said that the additional skills learned were extremely helpful during her Class A driving examination. She said

My husband's taught me little extra things ... I'm making the turn and I'm really looking in my mirror at the back of the trailer ... and he [the examiner] says to me, "What are you looking at?" ... and I said, "Well, I'm making sure that the brakes haven't locked on in the tires ... this is what you do when you go to run and you can check the trailer drag" ... and he goes, "I never knew about that!" ... well, this was good!

Needless to say, this woman passed her examination without any problems at all, especially since the examiner admitted to her that he had taken three attempts before he passed his Class A exam and had jack-knifed the truck on one attempt.

Familiarity with the individual who is training a trucker can be extremely helpful in perfecting skills and in building confidence. Access to the knowledge that their partner or husband has is important, but the proximity to equipment on which to gain practical experience is also critical. Similarly, women with fathers or brothers in trucking also receive additional training and experience, often at a very early age. One trucker related an experience that was made possible by her father that is inaccessible to most other women who want to drive truck. She said that she had been able to work a few weekends as a truck driver at the age of sixteen. The details of her experience are recounted below.

My Dad was driving for [company name] and they needed somebody to drive their dump truck ... a couple of Saturdays ... and Dad says, "Well, I know somebody who'll drive for you" ... he would never tell them who it was ... he just took me to work with him and we hauled sludge or something ...

Wives and women with family backgrounds in trucking log valuable driving hours because of the social relations within the family, and this gives these women more confidence as they approach their test for a driver's license. At the same time, many of these women
who are raised in trucking families or married to truck drivers are often less conscious about their gender than women who have spent some time in a classroom setting surrounded by men who are also trying to learn to drive a truck. One woman who trained with her husband did not realize the relevance of being a gendered minority in this occupation until she went for her driver’s exam. She said

When I went to get my driver’s license, well, that was somethin’ else! ... I went over to the mall here and parked it, and then I got out and went inside ... and the guy comes out with me ... I was his first female, okay, and he tells me that ... well, you have to do your circle check and you show him that you know what you’re talking about ... but everybody in the mall was standing outside watching me ... when we got back he says, “I passed you when I first got in the truck because when you did your circle check, you seen the crack under the trailer” ... so we went inside there ... and there were all these people in there ... and he goes, “Everybody, I’d like your attention please” ... and I looked at him and I said, “What’s he doing?” ... and he goes, “This lady has something to be really proud of, you know, and blah, blah, blah” ... and he says, “I would like everybody to congratulate her ... she has the highest class license that you can get in Ontario and Canada” ... and I’m saying, “What?” ... and he goes, “Yeah, she has an A, B, and an M license ... you can’t get any higher”, he says, “And we’re really proud of her ... she’s the first lady that’s ever come in here” ... and he’s going on about this ... and I say, “Oh, okay” ... so now I feel really good ... it never really dawned on me that I had made this big achievement! ...

For this woman, who had been driving with her husband for awhile, the idea of being different because of her gender had never been consciously recognized until she went for her driver’s test. Although not all truckers were centred out for attention as thoroughly as this woman, many mentioned being congratulated and complimented on their ability after they passed their Class A exam.

In addition, husbands, male co-drivers or relatives can also serve as a valuable liaison for women entering the male-dominated trucking industry. For those women who have husbands or male connections within trucking, finding employment is much less complicated than for women who do not have links to the industry. While some companies are more amenable than others, in terms of offering opportunities to women, many trucking firms still prefer to hire men. Getting hired is the critical juncture for women, for as they begin to seek employment they frequently encounter many patriarchal roadblocks within the male
establishment. In many ways the trucking industry is very much the epitome of patriarchal capitalism, embodying gender specific images of women and men which perpetuate male domination within the industry. For women who wish to work as truck drivers and are outside the male network, gaining entrance is very difficult.

Gaining Entrance Into the Trucking Industry

In the pages of a recent study prepared for the Canadian Trucking Industry, a critical shortage of truck drivers is outlined, particularly in Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia. Certain groups, including women, have been targeted as a source of recruitment in order to alleviate the employment problem that the trucking industry is facing and expects to experience in future. Some companies have taken the initiative and have begun hiring women truckers, but the vast majority of trucking and transportation companies are reticent about employing women as truck drivers.

In Ontario, the percentage of trucking companies that have hired women truckers varies immensely by location and size of the city. A short, systematic random sample of trucking and transportation companies in Toronto and Woodstock was conducted during the first three months of 1991. The results indicate that approximately forty percent of trucking and transportation companies in Toronto and only nine percent of trucking and transportation companies in Woodstock employ women as truck drivers. In the majority of these companies, the actual number of women is very small, most often employing only one or two women truckers, but a few firms have as many as five or six women out of fifty truckers. One personnel manager claimed that thirty percent of their drivers are women, but this man was the only person that said his company advertised specifically as an "equal opportunity employer". The rest of the managers said that when they advertised, they used nondiscriminatory language, merely stating the need for a qualified truck driver with so many years of experience. The intentional use of the phrase, "equal opportunity employer", which implies
that women are welcome, evidently signalled a positive response from women truckers. For those companies that do employ women, the reaction of management is very positive and satisfaction with the work that women truckers are doing is eagerly expressed.

However, the majority of trucking and transportation companies in these two locations have no women employed as truck drivers. In Toronto, sixty percent of the companies surveyed have no women truck drivers and in Woodstock, ninety-one percent have no women as truck drivers. Despite a scarcity of qualified truck drivers, many managers and hiring personnel are still reluctant to hire women. A contradiction exists, therefore, between the economic needs of the industry and the patriarchal hiring procedures of some managers and personnel within trucking firms.

Marx’s old adage that the worker is free to sell her labour-power on the market takes on a whole new meaning as the women interviewed for this study recount the difficulties they have had in procuring employment despite having the skills and training required. This is especially true for the women who wish to drive alone rather than as part of a team. Eight of eleven women that drive alone commented on the formidable task they had when trying to find a job. One woman suggested that she must have gone to “a hundred different places” looking for her first job as a truck driver five years ago despite having the necessary Class A-Z license required to drive a tractor trailer. Now at age twenty-seven and single, she owns her own truck and has a contract driving for one of the larger trucking companies. She is very conscious of the significance of being a woman who is also a "broker" and owns her own truck. She says

Before I went to driving school, I had never been in a big truck ... I had never seen the inside of one ... so it was all, like new ... and well, once you’re driving, okay, everything’s fine ... but when you’re talking about buying a truck, that’s a whole different thing! ... a female driver, that’s okay ... a female broker, that’s totally different, you know ... and the companies ... when they first find that you’re a woman, they’re sceptical, you know ... [they] wonder how you’re gonna do ... but then after they put you through their trial period there, then you know, they treat you just like the guys ... they expect you to keep your equipment in running order, just like the men ...
Another woman who managed to get her Class A license when she was nineteen said that she sent out fifty resumes and never received one reply. When asked if she thought it was because of her gender, she said, "That, plus my age and lack of experience". This trucker was single and wished to drive alone. For three years she worked at a garage supply company until she learned through a male driver that his company was looking for drivers and she was able to get a job there. Although her fifty applications were sent out nine years ago, hiring conditions in the trucking industry have not changed very much, and the minimum age requirement is still cited as a reason not to hire individuals.

Many of the managers who were contacted as part of the systematic random telephone survey of trucking and transportation companies mentioned that they only hire people over age twenty-one, while most set the minimum age limit at twenty-five. The minimum age restriction is particularly detrimental to women since many women are just beginning their childbearing and childrearing years at the time when this requirement is finally met. One woman, who now manages her father's trucking firm, gives a short history of her life, explaining how the age restrictions and the structure of the job conflict with the realities of a woman's life. She said:

I started when I was seventeen ... then I got my license when I was eighteen ... drove for two years, like around here ... you can't drive in the States 'til you're twenty-one ... so from the period I started and when I turned eighteen and got my actual license, I could only drive [in] Ontario until I turned twenty one ... and when I turned twenty, I got married and had kids, so that kind of ... trucking is not a nine-to-five job, so I basically ... in here, I was trying to run the place and I get out whenever I can ... that's my love, is trucking ... I betcha when I'm forty, I'm gonna be out on the road, I hope ...

This woman reached the minimum age requirement of twenty-one for driving stateside after her marriage and as she was having her children. Because of her status in the company, she has special privileges. Being able to drive locally is something that not all women can easily step into because short runs are often accorded to those truckers who have put in their time as long haul drivers beforehand. In addition, unless the individual has a person at home to care for the children or can arrange adequate babysitting, it is extremely difficult to do this job since the hours are very long and often irregular. Even for short distance drivers, many truckers
leave home at three o’clock in the morning to go to work, long before most daycare facilities open.

For the majority of trucking companies, the most common reason for the minimum age requirement is that they are insured only for drivers over twenty-one years or twenty-five, but age limits vary by company. Some managers suggested that the minimum insurable age for local drivers is twenty-one, while other managers quoted both twenty-one and twenty-five as the requirement for long distance drivers. However, a few managers suggested that by the time drivers reach twenty-one or over, they are more mature to handle the expensive equipment that is involved in transporting goods, while others suggested that in the interim, the drivers may have received experience in some other areas of trucking. At any rate, expenses are reduced for the larger transportation companies by hiring older drivers who are presumably less reckless with equipment, or have received training and experience elsewhere.

In fact, a couple of the women truckers suggested working for less desirable or less reputable companies in the beginning, in order to get experience. One woman suggested that women who are just starting out may need to "go to some really sleazy company and work for next-to-nothing, and get yourself a good reputation". Another woman related the details of the first job that she had to do, in order to gain experience. She said

The very first job I got ... I drove straight truck loaded with fish from Windsor to Detroit ... so I had my first international driving experience ... the load just stank! ... and of course, I had to go from Windsor to Kingsville and pick up the fish off the dock ... boxes of fish ... but it gave me a taste of, 'Do you wanna do this for the rest of your life? Would you do this without the fish? Could you stand this with the fish or would you really rather just give up?' ... you know, I gave myself the options and I thought, 'Shoot, I love the countryside, I like goofin' off in the truck, the fish have to go!' ... so you make a decision ... okay, I got rid of the fish ...

Acquiring experience through smaller companies and by transporting commodities that are less desirable are two ways of entering the business. Another method is to align yourself with a broker, who will provide experience and perhaps a link into the larger trucking companies.
A more recent account of the hiring practices of males in management in some of the larger trucking companies in Ontario was recounted by another woman who wished to drive alone. This trucker had two years driving experience on both straight truck and tractor trailer and was applying for a position as a driver. During the past year and a half she has filled out applications and made inquiries about truck driving jobs. Her experiences ranged from subtle, more covert discrimination, to blatantly discriminatory comments. For instance, while she was filling out an application form in one company, a female receptionist came over and said to her in a very sympathetic tone of voice, "Don't put a lot of hopes in this ... they don't hire women here to drive".

Despite legislation prohibiting discrimination in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, some male hiring personnel have no difficulty letting women know that they are not welcome. In another conversation with a male from one of the larger trucking companies, she was told over the phone, "Don't waste your time coming down, we don't hire women". When she suggested that his actions were illegal, his reply left no doubt in her mind that he did not intend to hire a woman.

I can do it on experience ... If you got two years experience, we take people with five years experience ... I'm doing you a favour, because you could come down here and you could fill out the applications, but we aren't even going to consider you ...

Legislation, therefore, is a necessary, but not a sufficient antidote to patriarchal attitudes. Patriarchal ideologies appear to be more powerful in these cases than profit motives for some male managers and employers in the trucking industry.

The opposition by employers to government legislation exemplifies the dialectic between state and capitalist interests. Throughout history, employers have often found innovative methods of circumventing legislation to suit their own biases and prejudices, not only in the case of women, but also with other oppressed groups. Racial prejudice came to the forefront when one trucker was asked if she was paid the same rate as a man and she gave the following response.
Oh yeah ... I think they really have to ... a lot of places they’ll tell ya, they’ll hire a woman to keep the Labour Board happy because they get so up on minorities ... they get so hassled on minorities that they’ll hire a woman before they’ll hire a Paki ...

In fact, the number of visible minorities who work as truck drivers is very minute. The 1986 Census of Canada lists only two visible minority groups who are truck drivers; Chinese and South Asians, who each comprise 0.4% of the total population in this occupation, including both women and men. At the same time, in the sample of truckers who were interviewed for this study, there were no notable visible minorities, although one woman mentioned that she had native background in her family and another had a Japanese father. In any event, the latest legislation on Employment Equity which focuses on the hiring of women, aboriginal people, disabled persons and visible minorities has been purposely constructed to avoid this sort of trade-off between oppressed groups.¹⁶

At the same time, the effects of pay equity legislation were noted by one woman. This trucker suggested that she thought that pay equity legislation had been responsible for a turnaround in thinking on the part of some employers. She implied that they were looking for new recruits from within their own organization when she said

There are some companies right now that are encouraging it [female truck drivers] ... they’ve offered a lot of the women in their offices ... because of this thing that they’ve come up with that says that women who do jobs of equal value now have to get paid ... they’re offering more different jobs to women ... so they’re encouraging it to some extent ...

Whether this sudden change in attitude is because of pay equity legislation is questionable. The likelihood that the jobs of the women in the office will be compared to male truck drivers is slim. More probably, the male comparison group for the female office jobs will come from a lower job class than that of truck drivers.¹⁶

Sometimes women who drive alone take a circuitous route into the trucking industry. One woman went to work for a drivers’ service which is a temporary employment agency that provides industrial workers to drive large equipment and do yard work for a variety of larger companies. She was aware that it was much easier for a woman to start driving that way
because the drivers' service permits the person to gain much needed experience, and it brings her into contact with people in the trucking industry.

In fact, the majority of managers said that the most frequently used method of hiring truck drivers is by word-of-mouth. A woman with family connections to the trucking industry also reiterated this sentiment when she said:

Really, I will tell you, I think it's who you know ... I'll be the first to admit that ... well, I don't say you have to have an in, but you gotta know your way around ...

If a woman has personal links to the trucking network, she has a much easier time getting hired. For instance, this same trucker said that a male friend of the family found a job for her. She said:

A friend came to the door one day ... I was at home and he said, "I got a job for you" ... I says, "Oh really, do I need a job?" ... he said, "Yeah, you need a job", he says, "I got two jobs" ... he said, "You be at [company name] at ten o'clock ... he said, "I told them about you" ... so I said, "Okay, fine, I'll go" ...

Another trucker said that she found her job through her daughter who also works as a truck driver. She said:

My daughter was working for [company name] as a matter of fact at this job ... and I was just piddling around in a little car delivering car parts 'cause we had just moved up here ... and she told me there was a driver's position open and she talked to the fellow, and he said, "Tell your Mom to come in and talk to me" ... so I went in to talk to him and two weeks later I was there ...

Two of the women who had built up their reputations as truck drivers recalled stories of being approached by employers and asked if they wanted a job. One woman describes her entry into a job with the Ministry of Transportation as a truck driver. She said:

Well, how I got my job with the Ministry was really weird ... I guess it was through word-of-mouth ... like, they were trying to find female drivers ... they were really into this thing of equal opportunity ... and like, this is my third year ... I think I was basically the first one that was hired, but like, there was quite a few after me ... they came right to the shop and asked me and I thought it was a big joke ... like, I said, "What?" ... yeah, like the supervisor here called me and they came down ... I wasn't there at the time ... when I came home that night, my sister ... she works in the office ... she says, "You'll never believe what happened today", and she went on about it and said, "The Ministry, the Ontario Ministry, was here and wants to know if you want a job in the winter" ... and I go, "Oh yeah, right", and I thought it was, you know,
a big joke, but I said, "I doubt it" ... well Dad said, "Don't be so hasty", he said, "Think about it" ... so I did and I went for the interviews and here I am ... and every time all the guys ... and every time they start buggin' me, I keep saying, "Well hey, they came to me, I didn't come to them!" ...

This woman had been working for her father's trucking firm as a dump truck driver. Through the trucking network, she was contacted by government representatives and sought out as a snow plow operator with a much higher salary included in the agreement.

Therefore, association with individuals within the trucking industry is very beneficial. For some women whose husbands are already established in a trucking firm, introduction to influential people can open opportunities for the woman trucker. One woman was offered a job driving a truck at a social event she attended with her husband. Her husband's boss encouraged her to become a truck driver. He told her that she would have a job with his company if she obtained her Class A license. With this promise as an incentive, she borrowed the money to pay for the cost of training. She now drives for this company, but separately from her husband.

At the same time, if the husband is a self-employed broker, his wife or another driver may be hired to work directly for him, thereby circumventing the larger transportation companies. Similarly, when a woman and a man co-own a company and have a contract with a larger firm, the payment for their labour goes into their company, and a wage is then paid to each partner. Many companies like to hire teams nowadays because it means that the truck can be on the road twenty-four hours a day. With the new state regulations, a trucker who drives alone can be on the road for fifteen hours total, but only driving for thirteen hours of that time, and then she must have eight hours of rest. However, with two drivers and a sleeping bunk in the truck, one driver can sleep while the other drives. This allows the company to maximize its profits by having the truck in operation continuously. At the same time, team driving is the best way to transport a "hot load" or a rush shipment. As one woman manager said
Yeah, teaming is the only way to beat a log book ... if you could get paid by the shippers to put teams in a truck ... you wouldn't even need log books ... that's definitely the way to go ... if there's hot loads or rush shipments, we put a team in it ... you stick another driver in it ...

However, one male manager whose company employs only team drivers, refused to hire single women because he said, "it isn't right to put women and men, especially married men in the same truck ... it's not good for family life". The implication is that these people would not be able to control their own sexual urges while performing their job. Although he did not specify which gender was the problem, the suggestion was to protect married men and the family. Patriarchal attitudes surrounding sexuality are clouding this man's reasoning, for the whole purpose of using teams is to have that truck run non-stop, leaving very little time or energy for sexual activity even if the desire is there. In addition, he stated that his own philosophy is that he "doesn't believe it is right for women to do this type of work", so the possibility of putting two women in the truck as a team is also out of the question. However, he did mention that ten out of two hundred of his truck drivers are women, but they all drive as part of a team with their husbands.

An added benefit for the corporation is that by having the wife and husband together as a team, they can stay on the road for weeks at a time with less complaining about being away from home. The wife/husband combination is very popular right now and may be the trend of the future. As one woman commented

You find that a lot of the husband and wife teams ... like, they're older ... their kids are grown up and have their own, and so they go to trucking ... and usually it's the husband that's trucked all his life and then the kids grow up and then he takes Mom with him ... you see so many husband and wife teams in the States, it's just unbelievable ... you see all kinds! ... they wear the wrangler jeans ... and the wives wear the pointed cowboy boots and the snap-up shirts and hats ...

With the aging population, some wives of truckers may indeed join their husbands on the road. At the same time the new regulations surrounding hours may make it economically more feasible for companies to seek out and employ teams in the future, including teams of women.
For those companies who have opened their doors to women truck drivers, the response has been very positive. Comments like, "We have some excellent women drivers", "I wish I had forty more like her", and "They do the same work as the guys", are not unusual. The Parts Manager at a large trucking company related a story told to him by the man who tests new drivers. This man was very impressed with a woman he had just tested and his remarks were very positive. The Parts Manager said

Well, he wishes some of the guys were like that ... she just had a feel ... let's face it, I think they don't tend to be as rammy ...

At least two other managers mentioned that women are sometimes better drivers because they have a "better touch". He said that "more touch than force is needed nowadays" when driving a truck.

One manager suggested that "women don't seem to have that macho attitude", and that "guys blow up easier". Similarly, another manager suggested that "Women are better than men ... they're not 'cowboys'... with guys, it's a macho thing". "Cowboys" are truckers who drive irresponsibly and are reckless, in that they speed, tailgate, etc. One woman trucker gives this rendition of what a "cowboy" is when she says

A lot of them are what the rest of the industry calls "cowboys" ... they're reckless basically ... yeah, they must think they're riding a big bronc or something, or you know, they're ridin', what do they call a wild, bucking horse, a bronco or something ... and they think they're home on the range and they're doing yahoo down the road ... well wrong attitude! ... you know, it is a responsible profession, you know ...

For many in the trucking industry, a great amount of effort has been expended in trying to clean up the image of a truck driver. Women are perceived by some managers as being neater, using less coarse language, having superior organizational skills, and being better at public relations. One woman trucker said that she was specifically hired because her attitude corresponded to the public relations aspect of the job that the company had in mind for her. She said

They liked my attitude and that's what I was told ... that they were glad that I'd come in and that I would be perfect for this job ... and I said, "What job?",
you know ... and they had something already lined up ... they were looking for somebody with my personality ... and apparently none of the guys filled it ...

For companies and management who wish to incorporate women, concessions will be made to accommodate women. For the woman mentioned above, the company adjusted a truck for her because of her small stature, so that she would be able to drive. She said

There are straight trucks in the yard where I work that I can’t drive because I have to sit like this, on the edge of the seat, to reach the pedals ... the seat does not move forward enough, it does not get low enough and the one ... and some trucks that do get low enough, I’m like this [can’t see over the steering wheel] ... and that’s not the way to drive a truck ... you need a clear view, you know ... so, I have a restriction, and they know the truck I drive is the truck that I have to drive ... it’s been adjusted for me ...

Basically, there are three types of managers that emerged out of the random telephone survey. There is one group that hires women and openly acknowledges their abilities as truck drivers. There is a small group who have not yet hired women truck drivers, but express a wish to do so. This group also spoke positively about the role of women in trucking, often saying that "women have proven themselves in the industry". The largest group, however, has not hired women as truck drivers, although most of them admit that women should be able to do the job. However, in this last group, there is a sizable proportion that does not think that women would be able to do the job as well as men. The most frequent concern is physical strength. One man in management suggested that women could not possibly work for his company because "there was too much lugging". The patriarchal assumption was that women did not have the strength needed for the job, that biological and physical attributes superseded the ability to do the job.

The women themselves are conscious of their limitations in strength. Many of them suggested that the men have superior upper body strength, but acknowledged that there are ways of getting around the weight. One woman said

I may only have half the strength as some of the men but if I’m sent out to do a job, I do my job ... if I can’t lift the weight, somehow or other I’ll work around it and I’ll do the job, you know ... they know I have a weight restriction because of my back, and of course, my size doesn’t technically help that much ... but then, there are a lot of little guys out there that drive trucks
too, so you know ... mind you, a man's body structure is built a little differently ... the muscle is formed a little bit differently ... it might be the same muscle, but they can cope with the heavier weight more so than I can ...

Another woman used co-operation with her male co-workers to move heavy packages and objects. She said

If I have a heavy thing to put on the truck and I can't lift it, I'll just ask any one of them ... 'cause they ask me if something's heavy and I go over and help them ...

However, for most women who are continually "hand bombing" or loading and unloading by hand, the length of time it takes to build up strength is calculated at around two to three weeks. One woman who carries sides of beef said

Physically I've tightened up an awful lot, and toughened up ... to lift and things like that ... I was surprised, it didn't take me too much time at all ... couple of weeks and that was it ... once I got over the soreness ... the first week I was dead! ...

Another woman suggested that the men go through the same process of building up strength, but have too much pride to admit it. She said

The first two weeks was loading and unloading and the whole trailer ... say you might have two or three stores on it, some are frozen goods and some are dry goods, and you have to take these off their different stacks and put them on this set of rollers ... the first two weeks, I thought I was gonna die! ... physically I was exhausted ... and I thought, 'Geez, this job is gonna kill me! ... and the next three days were getting easier and by the third week, I had muscled right up ... I had lost some weight, and I was very fit for doing the job ... and I was there for almost three years ... the men go through the same kind of ordeals as we do ... it's just that they're too macho to admit it! ...

The amount of strength required to do the job varies, depending on the type of truck and commodities that are being transported. If the trucker is doing "pin-to-pin", which involves transporting a loaded trailer to a destination and picking up an empty trailer to bring back, very little strength or lifting is required, mainly just cranking up the "dollies" or the legs on the trailer and closing the doors on the trailer, which is not normally problematic unless they get stuck.

Similarly, if a trucker is hauling freight, very often the load is on pallets and is removed by fork lift or tow motor. If machines are not available to load or unload the truck, people who are called, "lumpers" can be paid to do this job. "Lumpers" are normally unemployed men who
spend their time around receiving docks and truck stops waiting for trucks to come in, so that they can unload or load, and these people are normally paid cash in return for their services.17 Many of the managers and a couple of the women truckers mentioned "lumpers". One woman said

In the States or anywhere, especially in the States, they have what they call "lumpers" ... they’re just guys that hang around docks or you’d get on the CB at a truck stop and you ask for a lumper and they’ll come and they "hand bomb" your load ... and you just give them twenty bucks and they do it ... they just hang around the truck stops, or else the shippers and receivers will have a name ... they’ll have a list of "lumpers" and you just call these guys and they’ll come out ... and unload your load or load your load or whatever.

Another woman said

They go from factory to factory and make their money unloading trailers for people ... you get into cities lots of times and guys’ll be on the radio saying, "Anybody need a lumper?" ... it’s a job, you know, for them ... like my company, they pay fifty bucks for a lumper, right ... so if they unload the trailer in an hour, that’s fifty bucks they’ve made an hour ... so even if they get two guys to do it, they make twenty-five bucks an hour each ...

People such as "lumpers" have made the job easier for both women and men truck drivers. However, some managers still use strength as an excuse for excluding women from this occupation. A few other managers mentioned the dirtiness of the job, particularly that of the "bull hauler". A "bull hauler" transports livestock from one location to another. However, two of the women truckers who were interviewed had experience with "bull hauling". One woman gives this rendition of her year as a bull hauler. She said

When I was driving ... for about one year of that, was hauling cattle ... and at that time, there were no other women that I knew of that were hauling cattle, and I think that’s where the biggest shock came from, you know ... they used to call ’em "bull haulers" ... and you’d have the guys who were running the same corridor as you hauling cattle ... they’d say, "Holy shit, there’s a woman behind the wheel of that!", you know ... "She’s a bull hauler!" ... and, of course, you know, if you get dead cattle, you gotta drag ’em off the trailer ... so you’d be beside a bunch of men haulin’ theirs off, and all of a sudden, you’re comin’ out the back end of the trailer with, you know, a dead cow or a dead sow or something, and they’d look at ya as if to say, "Oh, you not only drive but you can do the manual work too", you know ...

Both of the women bull haulers were equally capable of doing the job, so the trepidation of managers in this field are unfounded. Another area where managers express concern about
the ability of women to do the job is in hauling steel. Here too, both strength and dirtiness of the job are used as justifications for excluding women, because chains, straps and tarps are used to cover and tighten down the load. However, at least three of the women truckers are hauling steel and they mention using a "cheat bar", which is a steel bar about two or three feet long that they use as a lever in order to tighten chains and straps. One woman said

I have a bar about this long [two or three feet] ... it's all a matter of leverage and you can tell just by the sound ... sure, you have to grunt and groan at times ... it's just a matter of leverage ... like, my ex, he was six, six-two, one hundred and ninety-five pounds ... strong, very strong, and we used straps on the trailer ... there again you use a bar for tightening 'em up ... I could go along and do the straps and then get my husband to double-check 'em, and he might get one more notch, which is diddly, but you could just go along and go ping, ping on those straps when it was done ...

Despite the confidence that these women have gained with experience, many of the women are still very conscious of differentiation between women and men when it comes to the point of hiring. One trucker summarizes her own feelings and gives some advice to other women who wish to enter this occupation in the following passage.

My own personal feelings ... it's a great job if you can stay the course ... well, it's not even a matter of staying the course ... it's a great job! ... the money is good, it's not physically demanding ... they'll threaten you with heavy loads, they'll threaten you with mechanical failures, they'll threaten you with all sorts of things ... stick to it, dear! ... it is a great job, the money is wonderful ... if they're offering you a hurricane, find where the eye is before the hurricane hits! ...

Conclusions

Many of the "threats" and reasons that managers give for excluding women from this occupation are merely patriarchal excuses for perpetuating male dominance in the industry. The patriarchal attitudes of some managers have not only inhibited the hiring of women truck drivers, but have directly contravened their own economic needs. Although evidence shows that association with men, who are part of the network within the trucking industry, frequently eases the way into this line of work for some women, indications from interviews with women
who want to drive alone and are outside the male network suggest that women are conscious of the definite roadblocks that must be overcome before gaining entrance into this industry.

However, there are an increasing number of managers who are recognizing both the economic and social benefits of employing women as truck drivers, especially in the larger cities. At least forty percent of the trucking companies in Toronto now hire women, although in small numbers. However, because the main recruitment technique is through word-of-mouth, unless women have access to the male trucking network, they will not be aware of the opportunities that exist. Conversely, if women are not conscious of job opportunities, trucking companies will be unable to choose from the best possible selection of candidates for the job.

The next chapter will address the social relations of work and the social relations of gender in the context of both paid work and unpaid labour in the home. The dynamic relationship between paid work and household tasks will also be covered. In particular, the formal structure of work will be examined noting the impact of both paid and unpaid labour on gender consciousness in women truck drivers.
Notes


2. Women's groups often work in conjunction with the state in recruiting females into non-traditional jobs. An article written by Janet Sinnott for the London Free Press on Thursday, June 7, 1990, notes the role of a career counselling agency called "Womanpower" that is funded by the federal government and actively encourages women to go into non-traditional occupations. Another article in the Globe and Mail on February 26, 1990, written by Steven McLean, discusses a new truck driver training program started by CP Trucks which co-operates with the Women's Employment Centre, a branch of Employment and Immigration Canada.

3. The 1986 Census of Canada states that the number of women truck drivers in Canada is 8,040 and 3,080 are from Ontario. These women comprise only 3% of the total population of truck drivers in both Canada and Ontario.

4. Cynthia F. Epstein, in her article, "Encountering the Male Establishment: Sex Status Limits on Women's Careers in the Professions" indicates that the protege system is instrumental in providing training for the incoming person, gaining access to the formal and informal networking systems and learning the "trade secrets" of the occupation and organization.

5. The fee of $3,200 was quoted by a Training Director at Merv Orr's Transport Driver Training School. The duration of the course was three weeks, one week of home study and two weeks at the training centre for hands-on experience. Merv Orr's Transport Driver Training School is where several of the women interviewed for this study were trained. However, there are truck driver training courses that can be obtained through community colleges, according to a study prepared by Price Waterhouse entitled, Canadian Trucking Industry: Human Resource Challenges and Opportunities, 1990, p.72. The tuition fee for a course at one Ontario community college was $1,650 for 28 hours of theoretical and practical experience.

6. A Class A license is required to drive a tractor trailer. Class B is needed to drive a school bus. Class D is necessary to drive a large straight truck (24,000 lb. gross weight). Class M is a motorcycle license. Truck and Bus Driver's Manual, Ontario Ministry of Transportation, 1990.

7. Most of the truckers interviewed suggested that a "short run" involved less than two days on the road. The majority of the women interviewed were working at least a twelve hour day. "Long hauls", on the other hand, entailed days, weeks and even months on the road before returning home.

8. Lembright and Riemer, in their article "Women Truckers' Problems and the Impact of Sponsorship", pp. 469-470, question the intentions of the men who encourage their wives and girlfriends to drive as a team with them. They refer to these men as "unintentional sponsors" who encourage the women for selfish reasons. They said that women truckers who work as a team with a male "often serve as a second log book enabling the male to legally drive more miles without a rest, and are convenient for
sexual companionship". The implication was that the women were not doing their share of the driving, but in my sample, the wives were doing their fair share of the driving.


12. Other groups that have been included as possible sources of future labour are visible minorities, immigrants, people who drive smaller vehicles but refer to themselves as truck drivers, other employees within transportation firms, young people and people in the process of changing careers. See Canadian Trucking Industry, Summary, prepared by Price Waterhouse for the Steering Committee of the Canadian Trucking Industry, Spring 1990, p. (x).

13. Karl Marx, Capital, Vol. 1, Chapter 6, p.166. Marx states that the free labourer is free to sell his/her labour-power as his/her own commodity, but on the other hand, he/she has no other commodity to sell.

14. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, The Constitution Act 1982, Section 15, prohibits discrimination on the basis of "race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability".


16. See Carl Cuneo, Pay Equity: The Labour-Feminist Challenge, p.173. He says that "in the absence of an equal or comparable male job class ... a comparison can be made between a female job class and a male job class with a value lower than that of the female job class".

17. The coincidence of the name, "lumper" with Marx’s term, "lumpenproletariat" is remarkable, in that both terms refer to the unemployed or the underclass.
Chapter Seven

Consciousness and the Formal Structure of Work

The guy at the other end doesn’t care whether the driver’s got three kids that they gotta get to school or whatever ... he wants his product there at such and such a time ... if they can’t deliver at that time, then they’ll just as easy get somebody else to do it ... there’s a lot of sacrifices you have to make when you’re in this business you know ...

I find my life is very unorganized ... I try to be organized but I know I’m not ... I’m always late and the laundry’s piled just like this ... like, I never get caught up ... one trip out in the truck and it takes me, like months, to catch up ... a week away from things can really screw you up ...

These comments, made by two women truck drivers, reflect the structural constraints that women encounter when attempting to co-ordinate their work outside the home with the responsibilities necessary within the home. Although conflicts between paid work and unpaid household duties weigh heavy on the consciousness of the majority of women who enter the paid labour force, for women truck drivers who work long and irregular hours, and experience sustained absences from home, the co-ordination of the two jobs is even more problematic. When children are involved, the tension increases even more dramatically, because within patriarchal capitalism an ideology exists that burdens women with primary responsibility for both housework and child care regardless of whether they work outside the home or not. At the same time, the structure of the paid workplace that embraces specific class and gender relations does not alleviate, but rather confounds, the work that women are expected to perform.

The purpose of this chapter is to address the formal structure of both paid and unpaid work, examining class and gender relations, and the effect of structural and organizational
constraints on women’s consciousness. Consequently, the dialectic relationship between paid labour and the unpaid work in the household will be discussed. The structure of paid work and the demands made by management sometimes coincide, but often contradicts the structure of unpaid labour in the home. The long hours required on the job as a truck driver often conflict with family responsibilities, and if conditions necessitate that the woman must reduce her schedule in the paid labour force in order to cope with parental or household tasks, her wages consequently decrease. However, if the woman is the primary breadwinner in the family, the long hours mean more money with which to support her family.

Similarly time management and efficiency programmes introduced by management both conflict and coincide with the woman truck driver’s needs. On one hand, time constraints and the necessity to get the job done quickly reduce her time in the paid labour force and allow her more time to be with her family, but on the other hand, fewer hours result in a reduction in the amount of money being brought into that household. Contradictions such as these permeate the consciousness of women and are the result of the class and gender relations in the structure of the workplace.

The Structure of the Paid Workplace

The structure of the patriarchal capitalist workplace is based on unequal gender and class relations. Class relations serve to benefit those who own the means of production and place power and control of the work process in the hands of management. At the opposite extreme is the worker, who neither owns the means of production nor has much control over the production process.¹ As a result, the worker experiences a lack of control over the conditions of employment and the work process itself.² At the same time, control over the workplace is also patriarchal and socially constructed so as to allow some men to have dominance over other men and most men to have power over women.³ Therefore, the formal
organization of the workplace is based on what will be called "patriarchal class relations", depicting the hierarchy of class and male dominance over both female and male workers.

Formal Organization

Within the structure of the trucking industry, the formal organization of the workplace consists of managers who are usually men, and these men maintain control over the work process. Decision-making is firmly in the hands of these managers who direct all aspects of the work including the way the work is organized, the conditions of employment, and the supervision and surveillance of the employees. And although time management technology and conditions of employment, such as hours of work and wages, appear to be gender neutral, when the ideological constraints placed on women in a patriarchal capitalist society are taken into account, there is evidence that the formalized procedures are clearly biased toward men. In an effort to illustrate the dynamic process by which structural constraints in the paid workplace interact with the structure of unpaid labour in the home, three facets of the formal structure of work will be emphasized, namely, time management, wages, and hours of work.

Time Management

Time management has long been a concern of employers who wish to maintain control over the labour process and retain power in the hands of management. Before the time of Frederick Winslow Taylor and the principles of scientific management, capitalists were studying the length of time required to complete a task in order to extract more surplus value from the worker so that profits could be maximized. The trucking industry is not immune to using technological surveillance of both truck and employee to maintain control over the labour process.

Despite the stereotypical image of freedom and independence of a trucker rolling down the highway, the time constraints placed on drivers by employers considerably limit their
actions. Ever since the 1960s, a machine known as a tachograph has been placed in trucks. This machine records on a paper disk, known as a "tach card", the time and motion of the truck (see Appendix E for a copy of a tach card). On one side of the tach card, the speed of the truck, the time that the truck has been running, idling or stopping is recorded by a small needle inside the tachograph that imprints lines on the paper tach card. This machine has the ability to inform management about details as obscure as whether the truck has been stuck in the mud or snow. On the other side of the tach card, the revolutions per minute of the engine are recorded and the person who reads the tach card can tell if the driver is grinding the gears or putting undue stress on the engine. The tachograph runs constantly, even when the truck is stopped, since it is operated through a clock.

However, the tachograph is now beginning to be replaced by more sophisticated electronic technology. In recent years, some trucks have been equipped with "black box trip recorders" which are also able to record engine speed, braking, idling and stopping time. In addition, fuel consumption, delays, accidents and road speed (complete with buzzers that sound when the driver is speeding) are also available for monitoring equipment. The black box has a detachable keypad and a data recording cassette which is beginning to replace the log book. The cassette is merely taken out of the truck and given to the dispatcher at the end of a run.

Even more elaborate technological systems are now available for tracking trucks and cargo, in which messages are communicated via satellites circling the earth. Computer systems are installed in trucks with keyboard, display and printer which provide a link with the dispatcher in their company. Central dispatch is also equipped with a computer that will display route and shipment information that can be sent directly to the "Mobile Data Terminal" within the truck. This computerized system allows the dispatcher to determine the location of the truck at any time, ascertain which deliveries and pick ups have been completed, and even calculate how much room is left in the trailer. The location of the vehicle can be
pinpointed to within three hundred meters through software that provides either textual format or visual maps that monitor movement of the truck. For management, this system of surveillance is valuable for improving customer relations since loads can be tracked down anywhere, hijacked trucks can be traced very easily, and operating costs for scheduling "reloads" and "back hauls" can be minimized. Even telephone bills can be reduced. As one woman manager explained

The dispatcher dispatches the information ... there's no phoning ... like, he's got the screen there and he'll print, "Reload Window Rock, Arizona", time, place, contact, and then it'll come up over the guy's screen and he reads it and gets his info and goes and loads, and then he punches back, "Loaded at what time, I have so many pieces, this much weight" ... and if they don't need to talk, the dispatcher will print in, "Okay, come on home" ... so it, like, eliminates ... like, our phone bills right now run us about $8,000 a month and that's a lot of money, and this is supposed to ... this should cut down a lot of that ...

The elimination of phone calls to dispatch is also an advantage as well to the truckers who have to phone in at regular intervals to find out reload locations. The necessity of continually phoning in can be quite annoying especially if the trucker is tired and wants to catch up on some sleep. One woman said

Usually if we get stopped where, you know, we don't have a load for about four or five hours, both of us will just crawl in the bunk and go to sleep for awhile ... but the worst thing is that you have to call them every hour, so you don't get a really good sleep, you know ... we have a phone in the truck, but right now, it's not working too good ...

The requirement of phoning in for reloads would be curtailed with a computer system in the truck, since a message would be transmitted to the printer in the truck, allowing the trucker to get some rest. Another advantage is that the trucker can also contact dispatch through this equipment and can use it to forward a distress call if necessary in case of emergency.11

However, the disadvantage is that electronic systems allow management to ascertain not only where the trucker is at that moment, but also up to one hundred of the previous locations of that truck, in order to monitor out-of-route miles.12 For the trucker who values
her independence and her freedom, these electronic devices are particularly troublesome. As one trucker responded

They can tell how fast you’re going, where you are, if you’re stopped, and if your lights are on ... it’s like being on a leash! ...

Electronic systems have both advantages and disadvantages for the truck driver, but will require additional training to learn to operate this new equipment. However, at the present time, the implementation of this new electronic technology is in the infancy stage because of the expense,\(^\text{13}\) so the majority of companies are still using the tachograph.\(^\text{14}\)

Over half of the women who work strictly as company drivers have a tachograph in the trucks they drive. Since company drivers are paid an hourly wage and are driving vehicles that belong to the corporation, a tachograph in the truck enables management to maintain control over that vehicle and the truck driver even when she is out on the road. From the tach cards managers can tell if the driver has mishandled company equipment, taken too long for a break or lunch, or exceeded the speed limit. Of the five company drivers who do not have tachographs in their trucks, two are city drivers who are less likely to have electronic surveillance and more likely to have face-to-face human supervision since they report regularly to the office of the company for whom they are employed. One woman drives a dump truck for her father’s firm and the other woman drives a delivery van. Two other company drivers have "governors" on their trucks that control the speed that they are able to travel.

Many companies insist on a certain speed limit for their trucks in order to save on fuel consumption and general wear and tear on the vehicle, and thereby keep production costs minimized. One office manager gave this account of the purpose of the tachograph and tach card.

The purpose of the tach card is it monitors how fast the truck goes for speed ... it monitors how fast or slow the truck is actually revving ... so if it’s sitting idling, we can tell that the tractor has not been shut off ... that it’s actually just sitting there idling, which is a waste of fuel ... it’s also harder on equipment ... it also monitors every move the truck makes, okay ... it’ll tell you if he starts from here ... it’ll show you that it’s sitting idling while he’s doing a check of his equipment, and it’ll show you his driving habits ... when he gets from here
to there ... how long it took ... how fast he went ... so like, it'll tell you everything that you need to know ...

In fact, one driver did mention being reprimanded for leaving her truck idling and wasting fuel while she was waiting at a loading dock. She said, "Oh yeah, they can tell if the truck's running or not ... that's another thing, if you don't shut your truck off at every call, you get hassled for that, for wasting fuel".

At the same time, most drivers recognize that the tach card has a positive as well as a negative side. If the trucker is involved in an accident, the tach card can sometimes save her because it can show that she was not exceeding the speed limit. One truck driver who was involved in an accident gave this account.

Accidents ... I spun out just with the tractor and I was going under the speed limit, so it saved me ... it wasn't my fault ... if it had shown that I was going over the speed limit, then I could have been hung out ...

Tach cards can also be used to exonerate family members who have been killed in accidents. One woman tells this story

I lived with a trucker for two years and he was a company driver ... I got a knock on the door one night at eleven o'clock and there'd been an accident ... I didn't know who had been killed ... either him or somebody else ... and it had been him that had been killed ... now his tach card showed that he hadn't been speeding ... it proved that he hadn't fallen asleep because he maintained an even, steady speed ... and when I went up to the inquest ... there was a woman from Ruhl Tachograph come up and she goes all over the country testifying and reading these tach cards ... it read right down to the last three-quarters of a second ... and that's when he saw the load across the road before he hit it ... that was three-quarters of a second! ... so he never knew what hit him ... never knew what he hit ... so they are good ...

Tach cards are used in accidents by insurance companies to verify that the driver was not going over the speed limit, and can save both the trucking firm and the insurance corporation large amounts of money in liability costs. In addition, companies also use tach cards to find stolen property. One woman trucker told this story.

Somebody had a truck stolen and by using that tach, they knew exactly where the load was taken, and then where the truck went after ... and when they found the truck, they took the tach out and the guy read the tach and then he went with the map and everything and the police, and they had it all marked out ... and then they started checking on it and they found a hydro guy that
had been up a pole and seen this truck, and seen the warehouse where he unloaded ... so they knew exactly where the truck was, and they went right there and they seized the goods and arrested all the guys ... so those tach cards work really good, but they’re on mostly company trucks ...

Protection of private property, surveillance of machinery and workers, and supervision of how efficiently that equipment is being used by the truck driver, are all integral considerations when installing tachographs in company trucks.

But oftentimes employers use tach cards to analyze efficiency in terms of time usage.

One woman mentioned that her company was not flexible in terms of time. She said, "They’ve got it computerized down to the second, how long it should take you to do this and do that".

Another woman also gave an account of the unbelievable expectations of some managers.

She said

When we started working together, you know, I just kind of went, “Oh boy, here we go” ... like I said, they basically expect the truck to be rolling twenty-four hours, and you know, they lose their logic in there someplace with all this ... with my husband having to sweep out when you change materials and stuff like that ... well, they wanted to know how come you can’t get there by such and such a time ... my husband said, "Well, what do you want me to do, have my wife drive down the road and I’ll sweep out and save time?" ... you know, I’m serious ... you wonder where they get the mentality from because they expect the impossible sometimes ... you know, heaven forbid if you might want to stop and eat! ...

The pressure to save time and remain within the speed limits set by the company are often an impossible task. Some of the women say that while tachographs are used to check for speeding, there is often a contradiction between the speed limits set by the company and the reality of getting a load to its destination on time. One woman tells this story.

Okay, a load would be sitting there that had to be in St. Paul, Minnesota, and it had to be there the next morning ... and you know they’d be saying, "Do whatever you can to get it there, but get it there" ... and I’m thinking, alright, you want us to run by those tach cards, you want us to run the log books legal, but you’re tellin’ me that I have to have it there in St. Paul, Minnesota tomorrow ... like, they defeat their own purpose really ... they know if they don’t get their loads there on time they give them to someone else ... but hey, you can only do so much to keep everything legal ...

Bending the rules is not uncommon in this business, especially when the cargo is a "hot load", one that must be transported in a rush. Another woman said, "If we had to go the speed limit
all the time, we could never do a hot load ... like you have to go over the speed limit sometimes to get from one point to another point”. At the same time, if a driver gets a ticket, the company does not pay it. The driver must take responsibility for speeding and she is the one who loses the points off her license.

Another trucker more directly confronts the issue of class relations when she refers to the use of tachographs and other time management techniques as “suits against workers”.

She says

We call them “suits against workers”, you know ... management against workers ... like management totally looks down on workers, you know, we’re totally second-class people ... we’re only necessary so that they can have jobs, you know, to provide them paperwork to push around on their desks ... and you know, we look down at management that they’re just total lazy scum ... they’re there to cause us hassles in life ...

This woman was very conscious of the routine struggles that occur daily between workers and management. Class differences and hostilities surrounding technological surveillance and control are not unusual in the workplace and often lead to various forms of worker resistance. One form of resistance occurs when truckers tamper with the tachograph itself so that the machine will give an incorrect reading. Although there are a variety of methods of altering the tachograph, the suggestion was that only the men are involved in this activity.

One woman said

They’ll use rubber bands to hold the needle down, and they’ll be driving a hundred and it’ll only show eighty ... it seems to be a thing with truckers to find a way to beat the system no matter what they’re doing ... I mean their goal in life seems to be to beat the system ... I think they sit in their truck all day by themselves, they’ve got lots of time to think about it ...

Another trucker said

They can be tampered with ... you can bend the needles or whatever ... I mean, all the guys do that ...

Another method devised by men to counteract the system was recounted by a woman when she said

We had them in a few trucks, but the guys end up knowin’ how to get around it ‘cause there’s ways ... use a magnet ... they can use magnets ... put them
on the side ... and put toothpicks in the hole ... stop them from going around ... I think it's silly having them timed, but I don't speed ...

Another technique was described by one other trucker who said

A make-up sponge ... that's what the guys tell me ... just use a little bit of your make-up sponge ... you put it on the needle ... yeah, I've never done any of it ...

At the same time, one of the two male truckers who were interviewed suggested that bending the needles is an ineffective method of rigging the machine. He suggested that "there is a 'thing' that you can put into the cable to make it so the tach never goes over fifty-five miles an hour and everything else looks normal". This trucker admitted that he had meddled with the tachograph in his truck.

An interesting point is that none of the women truckers admitted that they tampered with their tachographs, but all of them said that the men had told them how to do it. Apparently, when it comes to resistance against management's control, class relations predominate and gender differences are set aside so that information can be disseminated throughout the workforce. At the same time, one has to ask why the women differed from the men in not resisting this form of technological control by management. Explaining the difference between the actions of the women as compared to the men would be very simple if patriarchal ideas and attitudes were employed. Using patriarchal ideology, the lack of resistance by the women could be expressed in terms of 'female' attributes, such as passiveness or lacking the aggressive nature that men possess. However, rather than looking inward at the biological or psychological nature of individuals in deciphering this phenomenon, the social relations of gender and the social relations of work will be utilized to explain the behaviour of the women.

First of all, because of the social relations of gender and the social relations of work with its skewed distribution of women as compared to men, the majority of women, especially those who drive alone, do not stop for breaks very often. When they do, they spend very little time socializing with other truckers, unless they are people that they know. Many feel
uncomfortable going into truck stops where ninety-nine percent of the customers are men. Therefore, the stops that they make are normally for short periods of time because they are alone and they feel conscious of being different from the other patrons. As one woman said

I stop usually at fuel stops, which is different than a truck stop ... fuel stops just have the convenience store, maybe a deli, and your rest rooms ... rather than going to a truck stop ... I don’t like being stared at when I’m walking somewhere, you know, so that’s why I usually go to the faster places, and I never go into a truck stop restaurant alone any more ... I just feel centred out ...

In addition, the language that male truck drivers use also deters some women from sitting with the men. As another trucker said

You go into some of these truck stops and the language that comes out of these men ... it’s sickening! ... I won’t sit with them ... I don’t need to ... I have my lunch, I have my coffee in my thermos, and there you go ... my boss knows I don’t stop ’cause I just pour it and drink as I go ...

Another woman mentioned that one of her male co-workers harassed the waitresses at the truck stops so much that even some of the other men were embarrassed to join him. Therefore, because women stop for only short periods of time, if at all, they do not utilize much time for breaks. Consequently, they do not need to increase their speed in order to make up for time lost on their breaks. In this regard, one male trucker talks about the difference between some of the men as compared to the women who drive trucks. He says

The guys that I know in the business who have women truck drivers, or who have heard anything about women truck drivers, it’s all good ... women truck drivers are more reliable than men truck drivers ... most of them stick to their business and that’s the way it should be for all truck drivers ... I know so many truck drivers ... that’s all they do ... it’s one coffee shop to the next ... and these guys will get out there and they’ll pass you ... an hour later, they’re passin’ you again ... two hours later they’re passin’ you again ...

Similarly, another woman tells a story about male truckers who spend excessive amounts of time at truck stops, and as a result, tachographs have been purposely placed in their trucks by management in order to monitor their movements. She said

We only had them [tachographs] in a couple of trucks ’cause the guys were "screwin’ the dog" ... they spend their time in a coffee shop ... you know, they get a load off at noon and wait ’til three or three-thirty, then they come home
and punch out everyday at the same time, no matter what the load is, no matter how many stops ... same time every day ... he got fired ...

In this case, sanctions were enforced against at least one of the men, who was fired from his job. In another firm that is comprised only of male truck drivers, a man in management suggested that the tach cards were used to check the length of time truckers spend on coffee breaks. When the tach cards were analyzed, management discovered that some of the truckers were taking twenty-two minute coffee breaks instead of the fifteen minutes that they were allowed. He explained that if every trucker took an extra seven minutes on his break, the company would lose thousands of dollars, so these truckers were given a warning.

However, the difference in stopping time between men and women is also caused by the conflict between the structure of paid work and the structure of work in the home that women face. Several women mentioned the fact that they try to do their work as fast as they can in order to get the job done so that they can get home again. As one woman said:

Frankly, what I like to do is get out, get the job done and come home, you know ... and I drive until I feel that, 'geez, I really should take a break', and that's not right and it's not necessarily legal ...

Another woman mentioned the same idea in her comments below.

If I leave the house at five o'clock Sunday evening and you have to be in Oklahoma the next day, you can't take a break unless you leave earlier, and I'd rather spend my time at home ...

The tension between paid work and household tasks necessitates that women complete both jobs as efficiently as possible in order to balance their work lives. In this respect, the responsibilities of women truckers inadvertently coincide with capitalist interests of worker efficiency. At the same time, the fewer hours that women work as truck drivers, the less money they earn in wages.

Wages

The dominant patriarchal ideology delegates the task of being the primary caretakers of house and children to women. Therefore, the premise that many women truckers earn less
income than men because women are unable to work the same number of hours as men in the paid labour force is not unreasonable. Although there may be other factors involved, part-time work and shorter hours in the paid labour force constitute the most probable reason for the difference in income between women and men. The most recent statistics from the 1986 Census, depicted in Table 7.1 below, correspond with this assumption since the data reveal not only that there is a substantial difference between the wages of women and men, but that the majority of women are part-time or casual workers as opposed to full-time truckers.¹⁹

Table 7.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average Employment Income in Constant (1985) Dollars and Number of Truck Drivers in Canada</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Both Sexes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Income &amp; Total No. of Truckers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>261,375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Income &amp; No. of Full-time Truckers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>133,515</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Using the 1985 income figures in Table 7.1 above, women truck drivers in Canada, on average, earned only $11,776 whereas male truckers earned $20,661. Women earned only
57% of what men earned in this occupation. This includes of course full-time, part-time and casual workers. However when only full-time truck drivers are considered, women truckers still earned only 70% of what men earned. Men were averaging $25,726 while women earned only $17,938 in 1985. In 1985, only 37% of women classified themselves as full-time, whereas 52% of males were listed as full-time truck drivers. According to the figures, 63% of all women truck drivers in Canada work as part-time or casual part-time workers.

Similarly, Table 7.2 below reveals that at least 59% of women truckers in the province of Ontario worked part-time or casual part-time in 1985. Even more significant are the wage differentials between women and men truck drivers in Ontario, which are slightly greater than for Canada as a whole.

TABLE 7.2

Average Employment Income in Constant (1985) Dollars
and Number of Truck Drivers in Ontario

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Both Sexes</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Males</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Income &amp;</td>
<td>$21,606</td>
<td>$11,871</td>
<td>$21,914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total No. of Truckers</td>
<td>93,110</td>
<td>2,855</td>
<td>90,255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Income &amp;</td>
<td>$26,454</td>
<td>$17,446</td>
<td>$26,654</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Full-time Truckers</td>
<td>53,630</td>
<td>1,160</td>
<td>52,470</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
On average, women truckers in Ontario earned only $11,871 or 54% of what male truck drivers earned in 1985, which was $21,914. However, when full-time truckers are examined, women earned 65% of what males earned in 1985. Full-time women truck drivers earned, on average, $17,446 while men earned $26,654 in 1985. At the same time, only 41% of women truck drivers worked full-time, as compared to 58% of men who worked full-time as truckers.

Of the twenty women who were interviewed, fifteen women work full-time and each trucker was confidently assured that she is earning the same rate of pay as the men. Of these fifteen full-time truckers, ten are doing short runs, which consist of a work day that can vary in length from day to day, and can be anywhere from six to fifteen hours each day, depending on the type and amount of commodities that need to be transported. However, during slow periods in the economy, a trucker’s time can be cut to as low as four hours a day, or even none at all.

The other five women who work full-time as long distance drivers are on call twenty-four hours a day, and spend five or six days a week on the road. Consequently, long distance drivers usually log more hours and miles on the road than short run drivers. As one long distance driver revealed

You have to look at how many hours you put in, you know, because if you’re only working a regular eight hour day or even less than that, then your wage is going to be a whole lot less than if you’re working eighteen hours a day, which is, you know, a lot of times what happens ...

Because women are more likely to take short runs so that they can be home every day, especially those with children, the lack of mobility to do long distance hauls may be a major factor in depressing wages. The dominant patriarchal ideology in our society presumes that women will take the domicile role while men are expected to be mobile. So while a male trucker with a family often has the mobility and freedom to travel, especially if he has a wife at home, the married woman does not have this luxury.

Only two of the women who drive long distance have the mobility and freedom to travel continuously; one trucker is divorced and the other woman is single. Of the other three
women, all are married and two have children at home. All three of these truckers mentioned that they take extra time from paid work to catch up on household chores, quite often while their husbands transport the trailers that must be unloaded or loaded. All three admitted that if the housework needs catching up, they are the ones who stay home and do the unpaid labour while their husbands look after the wage labour. One woman said

When we come home, my husband usually drops me off and then he does the loading and unloading ... so then, I don’t really have too much to do with that ... but then in that time, I go haywire at home, you know ... I do as much as I can, you know ... and then when he comes back home, then we try to spend some time living a normal life together for a day, or half a day, whatever we’ve got ...

When children are involved, time off from paid work becomes even more extensive. One broker who has children takes two or three weeks off at a time when the children are on vacation. During March break, she stayed home with the children who are all school age, so her schedule varies considerably from her husband, despite being classified as full-time. She explained the difficulties with maintaining a regular schedule when children are living in the home. She said

Sometimes it’s easy, sometimes it’s hard ... it all depends on what’s going on ... like this week I knew I couldn’t go in the truck ‘cause they were home and there was just too much going on ...

Since she is driving with her husband as a broker and the wage that is paid for their work goes directly to their company, they can divide their pay into a salary for both of them. However, she admits that when they have a slow month, she does not take in a salary, so her wage over the year is much lower than her husband’s salary. She said

It’s cheaper for us to hire me to run it ... you know, say the company didn’t make hardly any money this month, I don’t have to take a wage ... I just give my husband a wage ... see otherwise, we usually just split his wages in two and I get so much and then he gets so much ... but for him to go out and hire some Joe Blow off the street, you’re going to have to pay him twenty-five cents a mile or whatever he wants, like pretty well, so he’d be defeating his own purpose by hiring somebody like that to do it because he couldn’t afford to pay him ... not the way things are running today ...
Although she did not give a reason why the wages are not always divided evenly between the wife and the husband even when the economy is slow, the reality is that her income will be recorded as lower than her husband’s because of the parental responsibilities for which she feels responsible. The traditional gendered division of labour is therefore maintained with the husband being paid for his work, while the wife’s labour in the home remains unpaid.

Similarly, another broker who works as part of a team with her husband suggested that with certain cargo, such as oversize loads, it is unwise financially for both wife and husband to go, since those loads can only be transported during daylight hours and must be off the road during the night. Therefore, a second driver is unnecessary because the number of hours on the road remains within the legal regulations for one driver. In most cases, she stays home while her husband takes oversize loads. This arrangement is preferable for her because she is able to be with her family more often and be part of special events in their life. She made certain that she was home when her first grandchild was born. She said, "I’ve taken time off for grandma’s maternity leave ... yeah, I made sure". Her husband, on the other hand, was on the road when their grandchild was born. Although these women spend less time on the road than their husbands, they acknowledge that their rate of pay is the same as the men.

Only three women out of twenty are conscious of being paid a lower wage than men, and all three are part-time or casual part-time workers. One woman who recently finished truck driver training school is currently working for a broker at a very low rate of pay in order to gain experience, so that she can apply for a better paying job. Another woman who works as a casual part-time employee and runs as a team with her husband did not receive her own pay cheque until six months after she started working. She said

I worked with my husband from February ‘til, oh about September, before I was put on payroll myself ... only because they weren’t, you know, they really weren’t planning on putting me on the payroll ... and then some things came up and they put me on payroll ... we always logged my time, but time card wise, it all just went through my husband’s name ...
A family wage was being paid to her husband for the work that this woman was doing. The reason the company was forced to put her on payroll was because her husband’s time card indicated an incredible amount of hours, which greatly exceeded the legal limit for one person. She is now paid three cents a mile less than her husband because she is classified as casual part-time.

Another woman, who is classified as part-time, has a job sharing arrangement with her male partner who is a broker. She drives alone one week, he drives alone the next week, and they drive together for the third week, so that they can care for his thirteen year old daughter. She also works part-time as a company driver. This is how she describes her pay schedule.

She says

When I drive our truck [alone], I get thirty cents a mile ... when I drive the company truck at work I get twenty-six cents a mile ... and then when I work in the city, I get fifteen dollars an hour ... and my partner, he gets a dollar a mile for our truck ... because he’s paying the payments on the truck and the fuel ... and when I run with him together, then I get ten cents a mile ... that’s just started ... he just started paying me that, just for income tax ...

Although the money goes into the home as family income, this woman’s salary will be recorded as much lower on the Census than her partner’s, so part-time work is also a factor in explaining part of the discrepancy in income between women and men in the government statistics.

In fact, for those individuals who work part-time, the wage rate may be smaller than for those who are employed full-time. In the systematic telephone survey of trucking and transportation companies, thirty-four out of sixty-nine companies, or forty-nine percent, employed part-time truckers. Thirteen out of thirty-four companies that hire part-time truckers, or thirty-eight percent, pay their part-time truck drivers less than their full-time truckers. The difference in pay between part-time and full-time truckers in these thirteen companies ranged from fifteen cents an hour to two dollars an hour. Another two managers would or could not say whether there was a difference in pay between part-time and full-time truckers. However,
the majority of companies that hire part-time truck drivers, or fifty-six percent, said that they pay their part-time truck drivers equivalent rates to their full-time truckers.

In this regard, the other two women who work part-time said that their pay rate is the same as the men, but acknowledge that they work fewer hours. When women reduce their hours of paid work to accommodate the labour requirements in the home, they are not able to earn as much income as their male counterparts, even when they are paid the same rate of pay. The lack of mobility of women to travel great distances from home, especially where children are involved, plus the double day of labour between paid work and unpaid work, consequently limit the number of hours a woman can work. Therefore, job conditions such as wages and hours of work may look gender neutral on paper, but when the ideological constraints are examined, the structure definitely works to the benefit of men.

Hours of Work and The Structure of the Unpaid Workplace

For many truck drivers, especially those who do "long hauls", but even for those doing "short runs", work is more than an occupation, it is a regimented way of life not of their own choosing. Work is scheduled around the commodities that must be delivered to certain places at a specific times, regardless of the time of day or day of the week. The structure of the job, therefore, requires a great amount of flexibility and mobility from the worker. The truck driver must be available to pack up and leave on very short notice, be capable of driving for long periods of time, and be able to spend a great deal of time away from home and the family. However for many women, these requirements become obstacles to employment as truck drivers because the dominant ideology within patriarchal capitalism holds women responsible for both household duties and child care. As a result, there are many contradictions between the structure of paid work and the structure of unpaid work that are based on a gendered division of labour. The structure of paid work, particularly the long and irregular hours, is problematic for both short run truckers and long distance drivers.
Most of the women who drive long distance spend five or six days on the road at a
time. All but two are team drivers, and three of the women work as long distance drivers only
on an occasional basis, doing short runs the rest of the time. Very often with teams, the
employer expects the truck to be in motion continually twenty-four hours a day. In order to
accomplish this feat, one driver must sleep while the other is driving. Consequently truckers
have irregular eating and sleeping habits. One woman, who drives with her husband as part
of a team, said that expectations from management place great demands on their time and
health. Her biggest complaint is

Long hours and getting to the point of being exhausted ... it's not like you
work twelve hours a day and come home ... basically, they kind of expect the
truck to run twenty-four hours ... my husband can sleep while I'm driving but
I can't sleep while he's driving ... that's the truth ... you don't sleep soundly
when the truck's moving ... you know, it’s just so bumpy ... we try to at least
have the truck stopped for about three or four hours ...

Similarly another woman who drives as part of a team with her husband gave a description of
their lifestyle. She said

The hours are very long ... we put in sixteen to eighteen hour days, and when
we're home, we're only home for a day or two and then we're gone again ...
so it's not like we have a lot of time off ... you have to be pretty much totally
dedicated to your job ...

For many women and men, this type of lifestyle is unthinkable, but for women,
especially those with children, the structure of the work makes truck driving as an occupation
extremely difficult. As one trucker who is very conscious of the conflicts between home and
work said

I have been approached right on the street by men and women both ... they
see me and they figure, 'Well, if you can do it, I can do it' ... and the first
question I ask is, "How many kids do you have at home?" ... "Well, I've got a
couple of kids at home" ... "Well, who's gonna look after the kids when you're
gone?" ... Who's gonna look after this when you're gone? ... Who's gonna look
after that when you're gone?" ... and I'll put the same questions to a male or
a female, and most of the time, they're goin' away with their tail between their
legs ...

Truck driving is not a nine-to-five job and planning a family life or even a social event is out of
the question because long distance truckers never know whether they will be on the road or
at home. One trucker’s favourite comment is, "The only thing you can depend on is nothing!". Lack of control over the hours of work is one of the biggest complaints because not knowing when and where they are going to be seriously affects their personal life and puts an enormous stress on the relations within the home. As another trucker said:

Sometimes they just don’t think ... you know, it’s okay for dispatchers ... they come in and they punch their time card in at eight o’clock and they punch it out again at five o’clock and they go home and have supper ... you know, they don’t care ... when my husband was working by himself was a perfect example ... they don’t care if he’s had a sixteen hour day, a twenty hour day ... they don’t care ... they don’t seem to think, you know ...

This woman now drives as a team with her husband in order that they can maintain their relationship and avoid the loneliness of separation from each other. Although there are more wives left at home while the husband is out driving a truck, an interesting story was recalled by a woman trucker who occasionally goes on long distance hauls with another woman and leaves her husband at home. She said:

I like running Stateside and when I get a chance to do a run with another woman as a team, I’ll do it ... but in the summer, I was gone all week, like, for a month ... I’d get home Friday night and be home ‘til Sunday night and I’d leave again, and my husband didn’t say too much the first couple of weeks that it happened ... he didn’t like it ... he didn’t admit it ... he thought it’d be one or two weeks and then they’d keep me local again ... you know, it’s always the shoe on the other foot, type thing ... they don’t realize it until they’re the ones that are home ... when I was on the road, of course I missed him, but the week goes so fast that you really don’t think about it, but when you’re the one sittin’ at home waiting ... he actually went over ... I didn’t know that but he talked to the dispatchers and said, "Can’t you get my wife something a little more local?", he says, "'Cause I don’t mind her being gone once in awhile, but not all the time like that" ... I said, "Well, you really should have talked to me before you went over and talked to them", and he said, "Well, you know, I didn’t want you to be gone all the time" ... I said, "Yeah, but if that’s all they had for me, I’m gonna do it!" ...

This trucker is very aware of the difficulties and loneliness of being the one left at home. However, she loves to drive long distance and therefore consciously resists her husband’s efforts to restrict her mobility and keep her close to home. However, her comments are an indication that the same conflicts occur between the long hours of paid work and gender
relationships in the home, no matter which partner is the one that is on the road doing long
distance driving.

A long distance trucker can be on the road anywhere from several days to months at a time. One woman trucker who works with her husband as part of a team said that when they started working, they were told that they may be required to be on the road for two months at a time. Consequently, when they leave home, they are never certain when they will return. As soon as they deliver one load, they are required to telephone dispatch to receive further orders as to where their next pick up is located and where its destination will be. If there is no reload in the vicinity, the trucker may face a two or three day layover until a shipment is located by central dispatch. The layover could be in a city thousands of miles away from home, and for a trucker who has children, this arrangement is very annoying and particularly stressful for the woman who must cope with a patriarchal ideology that propagates a gendered division of labour in which women are responsible for child care.

Gendered Division of Labour in the Home

Child Care

Even under ordinary conditions with no layovers, being away from home and children can be a strain for the woman trucker. One trucker who is the mother of two small children revealed her feelings about leaving her children for days at a time. She said

It's guilt ... you can get a lot of guilt ... when I have to leave and leave the kids ... when you're out there, you feel extremely guilty ... you're not there to get them ready for school and get them off and goin', but I think, if you're a normal person and you have a normal mind, you try to make the time you have with them good, so they know you love them ...

In a patriarchal society where the onus is on the woman to provide child care and nurturing, being away from children can be extremely stressful. At the same time, long absences over vast distances away from home and children necessitates considerable planning and foresight on the part of the woman who is both a mother and a trucker. One woman who
drives as part of a team with her husband has four children between the ages of eight and eighteen. She has a niece who normally stays with her eighteen year old daughter and together they provide care for the younger children, and do the cooking and the laundry. In addition, this trucker has her mother check in periodically to ensure that they are alright. Despite being part of a team with her husband, the responsibility for organization and planning in the home rests with the woman. She says

> When I leave I have to make sure the kids have got groceries ... you know they’re old enough ... they get along tremendously when I’m not here ... I just make sure that there is money left behind that they can get to, and like, I pretty well stock the fridge and freezer and everything ... and they’re actually pretty good ...

Planning and organizing the daily routine for those who are left at home while the trucker is out on the road is something that is common for both long distance drivers and short run truckers.

Even for those truckers who do "short runs" of one or two days on the road, the hours are long and irregular. For the majority of truckers interviewed in this study, the work day begins at roughly three o’clock in the morning, and can finish anywhere from five or six o’clock in the afternoon to even later. For a trucker who has children, the hours can be a problem. Unless the individual has someone at home or a reliable babysitter to care for the child, doing this job can be extremely difficult. The work day for many truckers begins long before most day care facilities open. One trucker noted the problems that truck drivers with small children encounter when she said

> They couldn’t use day care ... they would have to have a homemaker come in ... so they would be essentially having someone else bring their children up ...

Caring for children is one of the most difficult aspects that these women have to contend with as they head out to work as truckers. Availability of day care spaces and hours that day care are available do not coincide with the trucker’s needs. Consequently, extended family members are called upon to perform child care and this arrangement can also be problematic because of the trucker’s hours of work. As one woman said
I had my Mom watch my son and then when the next one came along, my sister-in-law watched her so it fit in ... like, it was kind of a pain having to take them to my sister-in-law's at five in the morning, and she didn't care for it too much and neither did I ...

The child care arrangements that this trucker felt compelled to make because of her hours created tensions between her sister-in-law and herself, thereby causing difficulties within the extended family. However, another woman with four school age children, ranging from six to fifteen years of age, had devised a system within the nuclear family that appeared to be working for her. She said

The children take care of themselves ... the fifteen year old is a female ... I think regardless of whether she was a female or I happened to have a son, they're all delegated their own little duties ... they're all delegated responsibilities to what I feel they're capable of ... everybody is here to assist everybody and they help each other ... if they don't help each other, things don't function well and then when I walk in and find out that things aren't done, then I get upset and they lose privileges ... so regardless of whether my husband is here or not, they have their own things, basic things, the rooms and stuff, I don't fuss over a whole lot ... if it's messy, they have to sleep in it, you know ...

This truck driver has a work day that lasts from three in the morning to five or six o'clock at night. All of the children have responsibilities, including starting supper and having it cooking when she arrives home.

However, in all cases where truckers have children in the home, the mother is the person who assumes responsibility for the care of children. Traditional beliefs, drawn from patriarchal ideology that women are the primary caretakers and nurturers of children, are evident in the majority of the truck drivers. However, the right to paid work for women, even those with children, is part of feminist ideology, as well as a material reality for many of these truckers. As a result of these contradictory belief systems, women's material needs, and the lack of parental support systems in our society, these women become burdened with the double day of labour. At the same time, all of the women are conscious of the implications of becoming pregnant and maintaining their jobs as truck drivers.
Pregnancy

Young married women are particularly concerned about the prospects of becoming pregnant and are unsure of the consequences if they do. Traditional values surrounding children and child care often surge to the forefront. One woman’s comments reflect the patriarchal view that women should stay home and care for children when she says

If I had children, no, I don’t think I could ... it really wouldn’t pay me to do it because I’d end up paying somebody to look after the kids anyway, you know, so I may just as well stay at home and do it, you know, look after the kids myself ... and I’m really one that doesn’t believe in, you know, having kids and then having somebody else bring them up, kind of thing ... I don’t believe in that, so I probably wouldn’t anyway ... wouldn’t matter what I was doing, what kind of job I had ... but yeah, I think the child aspect has something to do with it ... you probably wouldn’t do it if you had kids ...

Another young married woman who drives as part of a team with her husband suggested that both partners would quit truck driving if she became pregnant. She said

If I become pregnant, my husband would automatically quit too because he sees his role as being a father just as important as my role as a mother ... and we have agreed already, if and when the time should ever come, or if an accident should happen or something, that we would, then at that point ... the children would be too important to say, "Well, we’re just going to keep truck driving" ... we would just give it up ...

At times, a sense of changing beliefs in parental roles, especially regarding the man’s role in child care and nurturing are evident. However the reality of childbearing and pregnancy are something only a woman can experience, and this has to be considered when you are driving a truck.

One trucker suggested that it would be very difficult to carry a pregnancy to full term because of the nature of the work with the heavy lifting and bumpiness of the truck itself. In this respect, at least three of the women mentioned that they had, in fact, driven trucks while they were pregnant. One woman who was driving a dump truck said that she worked until she was five months pregnant. She said

Oh, until I was five months pregnant or something like that ... well, I don’t think you can drive truck when you’re seven and eight months pregnant ... I took a month off and then went right back to it ...
Another woman spoke of being pregnant and hauling steel, which is a very physically demanding job, considering that the load has to be chained and tarped by hand. She said

Even when I was six months pregnant, I still drove and chained and tarped .... yeah, all the guys, they got kinda like, "Oh no, she's gonna drop it here!", type thing ... tarps weigh one hundred and twenty pounds, some of them, and I do it myself, and chain it down ... the doctor said I'm super healthy and that's what keeps me going, is doing the job ... but I had to quit after the sixth, like before the seventh month starts ... the trucks, they bounce so much ... it could start the motion of delivery, you know ... so I was off and then I went back ... I had her in February and I went back in May ...

Driving truck and being pregnant are not physically incongruous, but one woman spoke of being extremely self-conscious while driving truck for her father's company. She said

I drove a truck when I was eight months pregnant ... I took a load from here to Windsor and up to Toronto and back, and I was eight months ... I personally felt funny just 'cause I didn't want people to think that I thought I was being supermom out there .... I did it because I had to do it 'cause the load had to go and I knew myself and I knew my body was fine and I wasn't a sick pregnant ... I was normal and healthy and there's nothin' to driving ... I mean I could have got hurt going to the mall in the car ... so I mean I was more self-conscious about people thinking that I thought it was right ... like, I felt funny out there because I didn't want anyone to think that I was trying to be super, like, pregnant Mom, type thing ... but I was well hid ... I had a great blue jean coat when I worked, so no one really could tell ...

The fact that she felt she had to hide her pregnancy for fear of social sanctions from others in the 1980s reflect how deeply ingrained the gendered division of labour is in patriarchal capitalist society, which generates traditional beliefs about mothering and responsibility for housework.

_Housework_

In patriarchal capitalist society, many women are still delegated to doing the unpaid work within the home, and as a result, the majority of women are having difficulty redistributing the labour within the home and convincing their partners to take responsibility for housework. Out of the sixteen women truckers who are married or living with a male partner, the division of labour within the household varied from three husbands who did very little or no housework to one husband who did all the housework, except for the dusting and
cleaning of the pet cages. In households where husbands or partners help out a little or do no housework, the individuals are believed to have "customized/conventional consciousness", because the gendered division of labour in the home conforms to patriarchal ideology that has been passed down through generations by custom or tradition. In the household in which the husband does all the housework, the individuals involved are believed to have "customized/unconventional consciousness", because the gendered division of labour in the home has been inverted so that the man is left with sole responsibility for housework and child care.

A more equitable arrangement for housework is part of two households. One woman gave her partner at least sixty percent of the credit for performing household duties. She said, "I will give him credit for a half ... and I would even give him almost sixty percent ... I would not give him a full two-thirds". However, given her hours, he practically had to take charge in order to survive. She said

I was getting up at five-thirty in the morning, leaving the house at quarter after six, and getting home anywhere between eleven at night and a quarter after twelve ... at the end of the week, I even, I forgot what a weekend was like 'cause I slept most of it ... he was looking after the dogs, he was doing the shopping, keeping the place clean ... it was very handy ...

At the same time, another woman said that her husband shares the housework equally with her. These individuals are believed to have "customized/egalitarian consciousness", because feminist beliefs of sharing household responsibilities equally have been adopted.

However, in the majority of households, the husbands did some housework such as vacuuming and the dishes, but in most cases, the women carried out the bulk of the domestic work. These individuals are believed to have "customized/conventional consciousness", since the woman is responsible for most of the housework and child care duties. As one woman said

He will help if he's at home and things need to be done, yes, he's very good that way ... he'll even, like, cook and anything ... and he'll help with the laundry ... he's not that good at it ... I'd rather do it myself, but he will, he will
... he'll clean the toilet, he'll do anything ... but I do more of it because I'm at home doing it when he's loading and unloading ... 

Doing the laundry seems to be the one task that women have the hardest time relinquishing. Many of the women said that they would rather do the laundry themselves. As one woman said

Now he does a lot more than what he used to ... he does the laundry but ... like I don't mind if he does his own, but when he starts throwin' the whites in with the blue jeans, forget it! ... he makes sure the kids get their meals when I'm not here and stuff like that ... he goes [shopping] once in awhile, but the groceries probably usually cost twice as much because they get, "Oh, I haven't had this for a long time", and throw that in ...

A few women mentioned that grocery shopping by partners was problematic because the men tended to buy more expensive food and brand names. Another complaint was that when the men did do something around the house, they expected to be rewarded or praised for their contribution. Another woman said

He'll get into spurts ... I'll come home from work and he'll just have the whole place spic and span ... and like, that's once a month, once every two months ... but he still thinks he gets a great big medal for it! ... forget it buster! ... do it every day and then I'll give you a big medal for it ... but in the same sense, I usually look after the house and the laundry ... he looks' after putting the garbage out and cleanin' out the garage and cuttin' the lawn and so it just kind of balances ... I'm not doing it because I think that's what a woman should do ... that's just the way, you know, it works out for our situation ...

Even when men help around the house, the work they do, such as cutting the lawn or fixing appliances, is congruent with traditional gender norms. The patriarchal gendered division of labour in the home, in which women do the greatest share of the work, was the most prevalent form. Most individuals, therefore, possess "customized/conventional consciousness". For example, one woman gave this account as to how the work is divided. She said that her husband does

The yard work, taking care of my car ... if something goes wrong, he fixes it ... any mechanical work, anything heavy-duty ... we still, as a couple, we still have like the husband/wife, male/female separated role and it's still that way ... we just happen to enjoy a profession that was generally male oriented ...
The traditional gendered division of labour in the home is going to be the most difficult to eradicate because men revert to patriarchal roles very easily. As one woman said:

When I first started, he was really supportive, you know, like, "Well, you can drive" ... he's pretty well liberated, I think, but still, he doesn't like to do housework, so he tries to get away with not doing it ...

Men have more to lose in terms of leisure time, should a truly genuine redistribution of labour in the home occur. If men were to equally share the housework and child care responsibilities in the home, that would mean they would have less time for pursuing their own careers, as well as a reduction in their leisure time. Many of the women resent the amount of leisure time that men have as compared to their own spare time. One woman expressed her discontent this way:

This really irks me ... when he leaves here and goes home ... if he wants to, he can go home and he'll lay on that couch and he won't do a dang thing ... he just doesn't have to ... I say this to my girlfriend, "How come men can just do that?" ... they get to just go home and lay on the couch and I can't ... there's no way ... first of all, I'd be mauled by my kids, to death, but there's stuff to do ... like I said, he gets in his spurts ... he's not perfect ... like last night I go home and he's laying on the couch ... he likes watching Young and the Restless ... he's home at four-thirty and catches it from four-thirty to five-thirty ... and he'll lay there and he'll get done his supper and go lay down again or play Nintendo, so that bugs me! ... I feel that if I were to sit down like that I'd hear about it ... so, you know, I think that he has a lot more leisure time than I do ...

Leisure time is a scarce resource for women truck drivers, even for married women without children. One woman works nights and is married to another trucker who also drives truck at night. She begins work at four o'clock in the afternoon and finishes at ten o'clock if she is doing a single run, and at four in the morning if she has a double shift. A twelve hour shift is not unusual for truckers since the latest legislation permits drivers to be on the road for thirteen hours at a time, but limits the trucker to sixty hours on duty during a consecutive seven day period.20 This trucker works six days a week. Therefore, whether she works a single or a double shift depends on the time of year, how busy her company is at the time, and how many hours she has already logged for that week. She explains her work schedule the following way:
When you’re driving a truck, you kinda have to go when the truck’s there ... like you don’t really have ... your social life kinda goes to pot ... unless you actually book a night off or something, then you can usually count on working pretty much of the time ...

Because of her erratic schedule, she says that it is difficult to get the housework completed especially when she works double shifts because of the time needed during the day to sleep. Although her husband works for the same company and does an identical shift, this woman does the majority of the housework since her husband works at his father’s farm during the day. Interestingly, she feels that she has more leisure time than her husband, even though she spends most of her one day off finishing household chores. Despite working at virtually the same job outside the home, the gendered division of labour is very traditional within this household.

The unequal burden of combining two jobs, one outside the home and one inside the home is difficult for most women. However, the structure of work as a truck driver, with long and unusual hours makes the job even more problematic. One woman who has been trucking for ten years is becoming weary of the tension between the two jobs and questions why anyone would want to become a truck driver. She says

I wouldn’t encourage anyone, man or woman actually [to become a truck driver] ... it’s not good for the family ....I’m not a content person because you’re torn when you’re home for a week and you wanna get movin’ ... and when you’re away, you think, ‘Oh, I’d love to be painting the living room’ or something, you know, so you can’t be really content ... and if you’re doing full-time [truck driving] as a woman, how can you have a family? ... if you’re younger, how can you think about driving as a career and having a family? ...

Similarly, two of the male truck drivers that were interviewed could not understand why the women would want to do the job. They were, of course referring to the exploitative conditions of work, the long hours, irregular eating and sleeping routines, and the time spent away from home.
Conclusions

The formal structure of the work is really not conducive to family or social life for either women or men, but in a patriarchal capitalist society that domesticates women, the requirement of mobility and the long hours ensure that the job is more favourable to men. The structure of the workplace and the existing gender relations present a contradiction for women. On the one hand, they are expected to perform equally as well as the men in the paid labour force, and yet they are not given special concessions, such as extra time or payment for the additional work they do in the home. The struggle to balance paid work with unpaid household labour is a daily experience that is constantly in the consciousness of these women. Because patriarchal capitalist ideology divides society in terms of public and private spheres, in which women are relegated as primary caretakers of house and children, women do not experience the same conditions as men from which to begin and end their work day.

The following chapter will focus on the informal structure of work, which consists of unequal conditions in the paid workplace. The relationship between gender and class will be examined, looking at relations between women and men in the workplace. Structural constraints, such as discrimination will be discussed, as well as individual resistance and coping strategies employed by women.
Notes


3. See the introduction to *Gender at Work*, by Ann Game and Rosemary Pringle, 1983.


7. Technological changes have been outlined in a study done by Price Waterhouse entitled *Canadian Trucking Industry: Human Resource Challenges and Opportunities*, 1990, pp. 90-91.


9. Information about this computerized system used by TNT Overland Express is included in an article called "Is That Dispatch Sitting Next to You?" in the April 1990 edition of Independent Trucker, Canada’s Business & Equipment Magazine for Owner Operators, James Pollock (ed.), pp. 32-34.

10. Detailed information on satellite tracking systems is provided in a brochure published by Cancom Satlink Business Services, a division of Canadian Satellite Communications Inc., 1990. The visual software includes maps which graphically locate the truck on the highway, within cities, states and countries and can be viewed from many different perspectives. Printed information includes the number of miles from destination, the nearest city or landmark, the amount of traffic congestion, and therefore, allows the dispatcher to provide accurate scheduling information to shippers and receivers.
Satellite communication systems are advertised as a real advantage for "just-in-time" deliveries which have very strict time constraints.

11. See the article entitled, "Is That Dispatch Sitting Next To You?", pp. 32-34, in Independent Trucker, April, 1990.

12. The brochure published by Cancom Satlink Business Services also states that dates and times of previous locations where the truck and trucker have been can also be provided.

13. The cost of electronic communications systems range from $1,000 to $3,000 according to an article entitled, "Hi-Tech Trucking", in the September, 1990, issue of Independent Trucker.

14. The study entitled Canadian Trucking Industry: Human Resource Challenges and Opportunities, 1990, p. 90, estimates that electronic equipment is now in about fifteen percent of heavy trucks.

15. Driving a tractor by itself is called "bobtailing" and this is apparently the most dangerous way to drive because the brakes are designed to have weight on the trailer, and if you step on the brakes too hard especially in rainy weather, they'll lock and the truck may even jump off the ground or go around in circles. The worst part was that no one had told this trucker that this could happen and it really frightened her.

16. Accidents, safety and health are other areas that should be explored in further research. This woman said that she had lost five friends in five years in trucking accidents.


18. The information on income in both Table 7.1 and 7.2 are taken from a book entitled, Employment Income by Occupation, 1986 Census of Canada, printed in March 1989.


20. The new hours-of-service regulations from the National Safety Code are listed in the study done by Price Waterhouse entitled Canadian Trucking Industry: Human Resource Challenges and Opportunities, p. 86.
Chapter Eight

Consciousness and the Informal Structure of Work

My husband has a term for it ... what's he call it now? ... "the old boys' syndrome", or something like that ... it's a man's business ... men do the business, men do the shipping, men do the receiving, men do the loading, men do the unloading, and especially, men do the driving! ...

I think it's a mixed bag ... there are some [male truckers] that they'll get on the CB and they'll really say that they're quite impressed ... there'll be others that don't like it at all ... they'll be mean and nasty even, you know ... and most of them seem to be just neutral, you know, they don't seem to mind ...

The comments by the first trucker reflect the patriarchal structure of the trucking industry, which has in the past excluded women from the male-dominated occupation of truck driver. The second truck driver's comments reflect the mixture of beliefs that are now prevalent in the attitudes and behaviour of male truck drivers, which in turn, affect their acceptance or non-acceptance of women in the industry. A few of the women outlined the three types of men that they encounter in the trucking industry; the first group of men are pleased to have women in the business as truck drivers; the second group does not really care; and a smaller group of hostile men embraces patriarchal attitudes and a belief in the gendered division of labour that segregates women from men in the workplace.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the informal structure of work, looking specifically at the social relations of gender and class in the paid workplace. Although the majority of male truckers accept or voice no opinion against women as truck drivers, the opposition of some male truckers to women truck drivers not only alienates women from the informal networks within the workplace, but also reinforces the male-dominated structure of the industry.
The trucking industry has a history of male-dominance and patriarchal traditions that are not easily eradicated when women join the ranks of truck drivers. In this respect, women are often viewed as outsiders or marginal to the industry, and these opinions frequently inhibit women’s inclusion in unofficial networks.¹ The "sex-typing" of occupations such as truck driver, as "masculine", bolster the connections between the job and the preconceived notions that people have surrounding which gender should be employed in this occupation.² There is nothing inherent in a job that determines whether it will be labelled "masculine" or "feminine". The reality is that both gender and occupation are socially constructed.³

Similarly, Barbara A. Gutek uses the concept of "sex-role spillover" when talking about the cultural norms that surround both gender and occupation. People are expected to work in an occupational role that is congruent with social norms for their gender.⁴ The stereotypical image of a truck driver is usually male, so the occupational role is associated with the male gender. When women defy the norm and become truck drivers, they frequently confront varying degrees of discrimination, intimidation, coercion, hostility and harassment. Women truckers work in an industry that is predominately ruled by men from employers and clients to males on receiving docks. When one gender is numerically outnumbered by the opposite sex, Gutek calls that phenomenon "a sexualized work environment". She says that a "sexualized work environment tends to have more obscene sexual language, more sexual jokes and comments, and more emphasis on physical attractiveness".⁵

Within a sexualized work environment exists a male culture,⁶ which reflects patriarchal relations within the larger societal context. Several male writers have illustrated the link between male-dominated jobs and masculinity, in that certain physically demanding jobs have been associated with masculine toughness and superiority.⁷ At the same time, crude jokes, practical jokes, sexual innuendo, sexist and obscene language are a form of gender and class solidarity that separates the male working class from the oppressive conditions dictated by managers and owners.⁸ However, David L. Collinson reveals that there are divisions within
shop-floor relations between the men because cruel and insensitive practical jokes, initiation rituals and name-calling are harmful and alienate some of the men from the others. Similarly, Stan Gray suggests a division that occurs between male workers after women arrive in a male-dominated workplace. He says that, "The shop floor was less hostile, many of the men being quietly sympathetic or neutral". However, Gray does acknowledge a small group of men who are extremely hostile towards women and he calls these men "psycho-sexists".

For some women truckers, the male culture of the workplace is intimidating and these women practice self-imposed exclusion from the informal networks. Indeed, a few women, particularly those who drive alone and have no family connections to trucking, have experienced so much sexual harassment and discrimination from males in the trucking industry that they have turned away from the group as a whole. As one woman said, "It's a no-win situation ... if you mix in, you're a tramp ... if you don't mix in, you know, you're a snob". Another woman who drives alone also mentioned her reaction to male attitudes and behaviour when she first started trucking. She said

When I first started driving, it bothered me so much ... to the point where I hated going to work on Mondays, you know ... just what guys were saying, the way they were acting ... stuff like that ...

The patriarchal behaviour and attitudes of some men in the trucking industry construct boundaries that prohibit the entrance of women into male networks.

At the other end of the spectrum, a few women truckers appear to have completely merged into the male network and socialize with male co-workers at truck stops, and after work at bars and strip joints. One woman said

I just became one of the guys, you know ... they go out to a strip joint every Friday night and stuff like that, and like, I just ... of course, I go along ... I'm one of the guys ... you know ... they don't look at me as any different than one of the guys ...

However, becoming "one of the guys" is usually limited directly to the immediate circle of men with whom they work--the men in their own terminal. As one woman said
The fellows that we work with ... they’re very easy to get along with, and you can carry on with them just as if you’re one of the boys ...

The difference between their co-workers with whom they have regular contact and their relationship to other truckers on the road is evident in the following comment.

If it’s not my guys, okay ... if it’s not [company name] guys ... like, I’ve known these guys for ten years now ... but if you put me into a spot with one guy I know and four I don’t know, I’m not liable to say too much ...

Women who have adopted the male culture are the most likely to join in on the sexual game playing, but mainly with the men they know personally from their own company. This same woman said

Yesterday morning this guy ... he’s a notorious woman lover ... he just loves women and it’s not a big deal ... you ask him what motel he’s goin’ to this week, you know, he’s a fun guy ... yesterday morning I walked in and he goes, “Oh, I haven’t seen you in so long”, he said, “Let’s go fifty/fifty on a baby” ... and I said, “No”, I said, “Let’s go fifty/fifty on an orgasm”, I said, “I don’t need a baby” ...

Another woman talks about the sexual atmosphere of the trucking industry and her adaptation of sexual innuendos. She says

There is so much sexual ... sexual overtones ... everything revolves around sex, it seems, with the trucking industry ... now I’ll purposely ... on my trailer I have aluminium boxes mounted, like, underneath the trailer for holding stuff ... and I needed one of the frames welded up ... and one of the guys at work ... he’s just a sweetheart ... and I wanted him to fix my box ... so I went up to him and he was working’ on his own trailer, and I went up and I sort of rubbed his back, you know a little ... I said, "Would you help me with my box, I got a problem with my box" [laughs] ... well, he just sort of stuttered and stammered a little bit ... and his Dad, he runs the shop up there, and he says, "I’ll help you with your box" ... and I said, "I want him to look at my box" ... it gets funnier than blazes at times ... like, a lot of times it gets really rude and crude and right down filthy ... but a lot of times, it’s very good-humoured ... I don’t know of any other job where it’s quite so prevalent as what it is with trucking and sex ...

This same woman has also adopted the symbols of sexuality. For just as some of the men have figures of women on their mud flaps, this woman has figures of men on her mud flaps. She says

My mud flaps are white, and I have a silver, like a chrome Western Star sign across the bottom of ’em, and then right dead centre are little chrome men ... I put my truck in two truck shows last summer, and everybody’s all lined up
the same ... like, the front of the trucks are all in a row, and I felt like I should have had mine parked the other way around 'cause I'd hear ... like somebody'd see it and then you could just hear 'em, "Where's that truck with the chrome mud flaps with the little men on it?" ... equal opportunity, what can I say!

This trucker also has a customized plate on her truck as well that says, "A hard man is good to find", which has been placed on a pink background with silver writing. Appropriation of male culture, including sexual symbols, sexual innuendo and jokes may be seen as a method of adapting in a male world; however, this behaviour could also be viewed as a way of empowering women or even a parody of male culture and tradition.

Nevertheless, becoming "one of the boys" has limitations, even for the women who join in on the sexual game playing and other antics. At the same time, many of the women do not integrate into the male culture as completely as others. The majority of women truckers are friendly and co-operative with their male co-workers, but many feel uncomfortable with the sexist jokes, sexual innuendo, and crude language, and this remains a conscious reality of working in a male-dominated occupation. However, one theme that does permeate the majority of the interviews is that although these women want to be treated equally as truck drivers, they adamantly want to remain different because of their gender. As one woman said, "I want to be treated as the opposite sex". They do not want to lose the feminine side of being a woman. Another woman said

A lot of the women truck drivers that you see are very masculine in a lot of ways ... like, I think I surprise a lot of people because I’m not ... I decided a long time ago that I wanted to drive a truck, but that did not mean that I intended to give up the best parts of me and become male ... not a chance! ...

Another trucker reveals the same sentiments when she says

You can have your femininity, you can have your equality as far as you want it to go, but you don’t have to become like a male ...

In this regard, the majority of the women are very conscious of their appearance and attempt to combine a feminine image with one of competence and ability in performing the job. Almost all of the women say that they want to be treated like "a lady", which in turn, appears to be
synonymous with respect for who they are, respect for their difference as women. One woman says

I can act every inch a lady ... it's something to try and maintain because you are ... you're in a male-dominated field ... you're workin' with men ... it's no piece of cake in what you're doin', and it would be very easy to move to the butch side of things ... so this is why I always take care that I wear my makeup, I put my perfume on ... I'm notorious for wearing pink ...

Another woman talked about a woman truck driver who she admired and had seen in a magazine. She said

She was probably thirty-five, thirty-six, and she was a role model of a lady ... a total class act, clean ... like you know, when I drive I don't look scruffy ... I shower every day and I keep my appearance nice and I don't dress up or wear lots of makeup, just 'cause I don't want to look like I'm out there ... you know ... but you know, I don't feel like putting makeup on overly much either, you know ... I just want to be clean ...

For many of the women, being treated differently because of their gender is seen in a positive light. Many mentioned feeling special and receiving extra attention and compliments from men in the business. However, the highest compliments come in the form of recognition for a job well done. As one woman said

One guy told me out there on the highway that my reputation has exceeded me, far beyond ... I was like, "Oh really! ... like, is this good or what! ... he says, "You're one of the first women out here ... you've been drivin' the longest and, you know, by yourself and everything" ... he says, "The guys know", he says, "Don't ever think they don't ... they know" ... I felt really good when he told me that! ...

For many of the women, the acceptance by some men in the industry provides an incentive to continue the struggle in a male-dominated workplace and resist the negative comments by others. However, they do not deny that being different also generates an antagonistic attitude from some men in the industry. In addition, the male culture of obscene language, sexual innuendos and sexist comments persists within the informal network.

An informal network between truck drivers is maintained through socialization after working hours, in lunch rooms, and truck stops, and through communication on the CB. Because many women are frequently not included or practice self-exclusion from these
channels, the informal organization of work is largely a male network. This separation causes a division within the working class based on the social relations of gender, which can be problematic for women, given the importance of the informal organization in the workplace.

Informal Organization

The importance of informal networking on the job cannot be underestimated. Informal networks between co-workers contribute to a sense of solidarity, an association with a group of people who understand and experience the same social relations surrounding work. In addition, workers’ networks often afford a solution to coping with formal rules that are rigid and confining, and render a method of making exploitative conditions of work more compatible with their own desires. Informal networks also provide access to inside information in terms of socialization of new recruits into the routine day-to-day operations of the job—for example, the speed that the work is to be done, advice on habits and idiosyncrasies of employers, clients, receivers at loading docks, and even the machinery itself. Access to information is invaluable in terms of personal safety and co-operation with other workers on the job.12

Access to Information

Access to information is very important in every job because knowledge is power and knowledge can grant the individual an element of control over her own life. Likewise for truck drivers, knowledge gained from other co-workers can often make a difference in terms of their own personal safety. One trucker reveals how information gained through experience and through contact with fellow workers can lower the chances of having an accident. In this particular instance, she is talking about how trailers are loaded. She said

There have been loads that I refused to pull because of the way they were loaded ... like, our trailers have the drop-bottom ... so there’s flaps ... so you load underneath the flaps and then you load on top of the flaps ... well, I’ve seen a couple of loads going to Montreal that they didn’t load under the flaps ... they just load on top of the flaps ... well, that’s a top-heavy load ... that’s
very dangerous and I refuse to pull them ... but again, somebody who is a new
driver wouldn’t know that ...

Informal networks, therefore, can be very helpful in teaching newcomers safety measures and
the peculiarities of the job. Informal networks can also be used to regulate the pace of work.
One woman was told by her fellow workers that she was completing her runs too fast, and she
was told to slow down. This is what she said

Occasionally I’m told to slow down because I’m not taking as much time as the
guys would ... but I’ve always been the type of person that once I know how
to do something, I like to get it done ... I’m not there to actually socialize with
the customers ... I’m just supposed to be sociable with the customers, which,
there’s a lot of difference ...

However, if the person is outside the network, the process of learning may be
extremely disconcerting. For women who drive as a team, access to valuable information and
inside knowledge is more readily available because they have a link to the informal network
through a male partner. However, when both partners are new to the trucking industry,
problems can occur as well. One woman reveals the problems that she and her husband had
when they first started to drive. She said

There is no school you can go to to find out what all the rules really are, and
the only way you get to know is either by asking other drivers, and quite often
they’ll lie to you just to be nasty ... so then you still get into trouble, or you
gotta learn the hard way ... or you know, sometimes, you know, if you’re new
at the job, maybe the dispatcher will tell you some things, but they can never
tell you everything ... there is a lot to know ... so it’s really too bad that way
’cause we had to learn an awful lot of things the hard way, you know, and you
don’t mean to be in trouble or to do something illegal ... you know, we’ve done
things illegally and we didn’t even know we were doing it illegally ...

Apparently, even for couples who are new to the industry and lack ties to the informal
network, difficulties can arise as well. However, for women who drive alone, acquiring
information may be more problematic. One woman became extremely frustrated by co-workers
who refused to show her the proper way to do a task. She said

There are so many people against you ... nobody wants to help ... like I don’t
like being laughed at ... if I’m doing something wrong, tell me what it is and
show me how to do it right ... don’t stand there and watch me get hurt ... and
I’ve seen that ... why not come and tell me what I’m doing wrong? ...
At the same time, she had also experienced the opposite extreme. She found that some males who were extremely patronizing often had ulterior motives. She said, "Once they found they weren’t going to get anywhere, they stopped being helpful". She also had to deal with insinuations that she was sleeping with the boss whenever she was given any new equipment. Her explanation was that "they don’t know how to deal with us on any level other than a sexual one". When women are viewed primarily as sexual objects or treated differently because of their gender, discrimination can occur by employers, customers and co-workers alike.

**Discrimination**

Discrimination against women truck drivers is practised by employers who refuse to hire women as truck drivers, by clients to whom goods are delivered, by corporate clients of the larger trucking company, and by co-workers. For women who work alone, discrimination is often more severe and direct than for those who drive as part of a team, because the female half of the team is often thought of, and referred to, as a "helper", which is insulting in its own right. However, having a male co-driver in many ways alleviates the confrontations and discrimination, but not always. One trucker spoke about the differential treatment she has experienced at Customs as compared to her husband. She says

> What really bothered me was when we crossed the border and they’d make me show I.D. whereas they would never ask my husband for I.D. ... it mostly happened if I was in the passenger seat and he was driving, but even a couple of times if I was driving and they’d ask me for I.D. but not my husband ...

This trucker was very conscious of being treated differently than her husband because she is a woman. However, women who drive alone are even more susceptible to open hostility from some males. One woman who started working in a shop at a trucking firm while she was taking her truck driver training course, was told very bluntly that she didn’t belong there. The patriarchal attitudes of the mechanic that she had to work with came to the forefront as he let her know how he felt the first day that she went into his shop. He said to her
I'll tell ya right out ... I don't want ya ... this is no place for a woman ... it's dirty and it's dangerous ... but they told me it would look good to the Labour Board, so I says, I'll give ya a try ... I'll make a deal with you ... stay out of my face and I'll stay off your back ...

This woman said that after working with this man for awhile, he became one of her greatest allies. Continual day-to-day interaction with female workers, who are efficient and capable of doing the job, sometimes has the effect of changing male attitudes about women, even in nontraditional jobs.¹³

At the same time, patriarchal attitudes from management can also result in a difference in the treatment of women truckers as opposed to male truck drivers. One trucker who decided to run stateside for her company related the condescending attitude of her manager when she said

I didn't know if I wanted to run the States or not, and I thought, well geez, you know, I'm qualified for it ... I decided it would be a decent ... you know, a nice thing to do, and I had done it before, so I told them I would run the States ... and the manager down there ... he said, "We have a trip ... it's got to get to Pennsylvania ... okay, this is the first time we've ever sent a woman across the border ... I hope you don't do anything to make us ashamed" ... this is last year for goodness sake, in 1990 this happened! ... and I said, "Oh, alright" ... like I said, I'm past the point of ... you know, like I'm nearly in the stage of disgust or amusement ... but I said, "Oh alright, well, you know, I'll do my best" ... you know, and I felt like saluting over the phone! ...

Treating women differently can result in reluctance to send women on particular types of runs, as in the case above, but can also happen at informal social events, such as staff parties. Another woman tells of her experience with her manager at a Christmas party, while at the same time, referring to herself as "one of the boys". She said

I'm just sort of considered one of the boys ... like my boss, he says, "Boy, for a truck driver, you sure got a cute ass!" ... or at the Christmas party a couple of years ago ... he was upstairs foldin' cards ... it was just a little get-together at the yard ... and I went up and he gave me a Christmas kiss, and I says, "Now, I don't want any preferential treatment, you go downstairs and kiss the rest of those guys" ... he says, "I'm not goin' down there and kiss them" ... stuff like that ... and it just runs off your back ...
This trucker is the only woman in her company, and the contradiction between being one of the boys and the differential treatment of her by her boss did not seem to bother her, despite the fact that she works with him on a daily basis.

However, many of the men that women truck drivers encounter, such as clients, are seen only on an intermittent basis. Although the majority of clients generally have no preference as to whether their commodities are delivered by a woman or a man, the odd client can cause real problems for the woman truck driver. One woman who delivers sides of beef that weigh, on average, one hundred and fifty pounds has this story to tell about how one customer filed a complaint against her. She said

The customer wanted me to take the beef off the truck, walk it into the cooler and hang it ... by myself with nobody even holding the hook ... now the men aren’t expected to do this, see, because it’s really, really hard to hang beef without somebody holding the hook because, of course, the hook moves ... but the men ... I asked the driver that usually did it and he says, "Oh no, he always helps" ... 

This woman had spent weeks building up her strength so that she could carry the weight and do the job. The customer complained to the larger corporate client that had a contract with her transportation company. The corporate client told her employer that "they didn’t want her hauling their product because a woman shouldn’t carry that amount of weight". She said

They threatened my company ... they told them that they will take away their business ... that business is our biggest account ... if I continue to haul their products ... and that’s what they threatened this summer ... so I got this letter that I’ve been taken off the route which means I’m stuck back in the city again ...

This trucker has taken her case to the Human Rights Commission, and although relations at work were tense for some time, she still has a job with the same company.

Another woman tells a story about an American client who tried to ostracize her by using the so-called male preserve of sports as a topic. However, to his surprise, she is an avid sports fan and was able to confront him on his own terms. She said

The plant manager was a little pain-in-the-neck ... the guy had a real attitude to everybody, not just, you know, me ... when he saw me, he started mouthing off about a woman, and then he said to me, "You stole all our
baseball players" ... as you know, the Canadians, we Canadians, stole all their baseball players ... and I said, "Yeah, well, you stole all our hockey players" ... so after that we got along great ... but it did take awhile ...

In addition to clients at receiving docks, other men and male truck drivers can make women truckers feel very conscious of their gender because they purposely come out to watch women back a truck into the dock. An awareness of being treated differently because of their gender was articulated by this woman

When they find out it’s a woman, they’ll all come out there and watch, to see if you can back up, right ... there’s a woman, right! ... you have to learn how to do that pretty quick ... you do it the first shot, well, that’s pretty good, you’re really good for a woman, right ... if it takes two or three shots, well, it’s only a woman, right ...

A consciousness of being a woman and continually having to prove yourself while doing a job that has historically been classified as men’s work is evident in another woman’s remarks. She says

To be called equal, like, you have to do the job twice as well ... like say, if you were backing in somewhere ... a guy might have a hard time backing in somewhere but they don’t think twice about it ... but if they see a woman pulling in ... I don’t know about anybody else, but myself, I don’t like it when there’s a whole cluster of guys standing at the door watching you ... and then if you don’t get it in there right the first couple of tries, they’ll come out and they’ll actually say, "Do you want me to put that in there for you?" ... I say, "No, I’ll do it myself, go away and leave me alone ... if you go away and leave me alone, I’ll have an easier time of it, you know” ...

Backing up a truck is a very important skill to learn in order to avoid the embarrassment that occurs when numerous men purposely gather to watch a woman back a truck into a receiving dock. Almost every woman interviewed mentioned incidents such as this at receiving docks. However one of the biggest complaints surrounding companies and loading docks is the lack of washroom and change room facilities for women, which many transport companies do not have, even though they do provide them for men. Not having your own washroom often proves humiliating for the women. One woman tells this tale about asking to use the office washroom in her own terminal.

There’s a ladies’ washroom upstairs, and it’s so embarrassing because, you know, you go into the dispatch where we have the pigeon holes and stuff like
that, and you talk through a window to the dispatcher ... well, nobody goes beyond that into the office ... and I stand there, and you know, I get one of their attention, and they come back, "What for?" ... you know, they never say, "What for", if there's nobody else around ... you have to have a sense of humour and be able to take a lot ...

Another woman whose company does have a women's washroom does not have a women's change room. At the same time the company does not want the drivers to wear their uniforms to and from work, and this has caused problems for this woman. She says

We're not supposed to wear our uniforms to or from work ... well, we have a men's washroom, a ladies' washroom and a big men's change room ... so they expect me to change in the ladies' washroom ... I don't change there and they complain about it a lot, but if they wanna suspend me, suspend me ... I'll grieve it because, you know, I don't have a change room and I'm not changing in the washroom ... the washroom's filthy ... the guys use it 'cause I'm the only woman that's working there right now, so if one washroom's busy, they use mine, and it's always filthy ... so hey, I'm not changing my clothes in there ...

The lack of facilities and the disagreement about where she is going to change her clothes is an ongoing problem despite the fact that this woman has been employed for the same company for the last five years. Because of the male structure of trucking companies and the male structure of receiving docks, washroom facilities are rarely provided for women truckers. In addition, the fear of sexual harassment from males is constant in the minds of most women, not just truckers.

Sexual Harassment

To begin with, it is important to emphasize that male truckers do not have a monopoly on sexual harassment. Sexual harassment can occur in any workplace, both white-collar and blue-collar, as well as in traditional and nontraditional work that women perform. In fact many articles on women in nontraditional jobs, other than trucking, discuss the realities of sexual harassment in the workplace. In addition, sexual harassment has many forms--verbal innuendo, sexual advances, propositions, whistling, staring, and derogative remarks. The most
severe type of sexual harassment is, of course, physical assault. In any form, sexual harassment is an exercise of power or domination over another person.

Most of the women truck drivers interviewed suggested that the majority of male truck drivers are decent human beings. Only a minute proportion of males in the trucking industry are considered to be really bad and overly hostile. The majority of complaints by women truck drivers are against the crude language that men use and the innuendoes and derogatory remarks about women. One woman said that she stopped going into the lunch room at work for this reason because the room became silent as soon as she walked in. She said

That’s the one thing I do avoid at work is I don’t go in the lunch room because I find they stop talking when I walk in the lunch room for some reason ... it’s not necessarily because I walk in the room, it’s because I happen to be a woman ... whereas with some women who talk on the same level or use the same kind of language or whatever, they don’t stop talking ... it’s all in their perception of you ... so as far as I’m concerned, I don’t mind the way they perceive me because they still think of me as a woman ... I’m not technically one of the guys ... and as far as I’m concerned, that’s the way I wanna stay ...

Avoiding the areas where men congregate is one means of resistance to male culture and coarse language. Another woman confronted the language of the men more directly. She said

Okay, I don’t usually use the f-word ... I feel that our vocabulary, the English language, is so vast and varied, you know, we really don’t need to use words like that ... and I've had some guys say, "Well yeah, this goddamn truck's no f'in' good", and I'll say, "Well, you're f'in' right, it ain’t" ... and that's when they look at me, and they don’t like hearing it come out of a woman’s mouth, and I just stand there and smile as if to say, "Hey, don’t use it around me" ... or sometimes I’ve come out and said, "Well, you know, like I don’t particularly enjoy that kind of language", you know ... and sometimes, very rarely, have they come back and said, "Well, that’s too f’in’ bad, then don’t be in the business" ... you know, it’s been very, very rare that you get them with a really nasty attitude, but it does happen ...

Direct confrontation and the ability to make men aware that their language is unacceptable is another technique of resistance that women use. However, more subtle reminders are also employed by some women to remind men that their sexist comments are not appreciated.
Another trucker commented on the conversations at truck stops. She drives as part of a team with her husband and they sometimes join co-workers at places along the road. She said

When you’re sitting in a restaurant or something like that ... it’s like they kind of forget that you are female ’cause they’re sitting there and they’re making comments about other females that are around ... and they’ll be watching a waitress ... it’s like everybody’s head turns and watches ... and I just say, “Must be time for you to go home” ...

Another trucker also spoke about conversations at truck stops and the difference between being just another driver, as opposed to being another driver who is a woman. She said

You know, a lot of them treat you just like another driver ... and I’m not gonna say just like another guy because they don’t, you know ... there is a difference ... when they see you at truck stops ... I’ve been invited to sit down with some of the guys I’ve been talking to on the CB and they treat you like just another driver ... but the main difference is, you can sit there and you can joke and talk with them, but if they see a woman go by that they particularly like her physique, they’ll say, "Oh, just look at the [cough] on that one!" ... and as she’s walking away, just to remind them that there’s a lady here, I’ll say, "Yeah, but you know, she’s kind of fat in the hips, isn’t she?" ... and they sort of look at me and go, "Oh yeah, right, like she shouldn’t be commenting on things like that" ... then they learn they can’t say anything ...

At the same time, there is a difference as well between the level of harassment that women who drive as a team experience, as compared to women who drive alone. For those who drive as a team, the male partner serves as a buffer between his female partner and other males. Another woman talked about the difference in male attitudes if they think you are working as a team with a man as compared to working alone. She said

A lot of times if they ask you if you’re driving by yourself, you tell them your husband is sleeping in the bunk, you get a lot more respect ... like on the radio ... if they think you’re by yourself, they’ll treat you totally different than if they know you have your husband with you ... they do! ... it’s like two different people ... like, oh, you’re a wife, or you’re a target, you know ... I’m serious ... not all guys ... a lot of guys aren’t like that, but there are so many guys out there ... it’s almost like they think it’s their responsibility to at least try ...

Propositions from men truckers are part of the conscious reality for women truck drivers. However, harassment can be very direct and hostile and can take many forms. Male hostility can take the shape of deliberate sabotage of equipment. One woman trucker had the brakes on her rear trailer shut off while she went in to have a coffee at a service centre. What
amazed her most was that it had to be another trucker who did it and that driver would be
aware of the consequences of his actions. She said

You have to really watch yourself, because there are men out there who are
very hateful towards women in their niche ... so like, when you go into truck
stops and stuff like that ... you come out and check your couplings ... you
check, you double-check everything to make sure that somebody hasn’t ... I
had my brakes shut off on me once ... I stopped in at a service centre and
went in and grabbed a coffee, and when I came back out somebody had shut
the brakes off to my rear trailer ... which if you didn’t double check, you
wouldn’t know until you stepped on the brakes and realized that you didn’t
have ... like you would have half your braking power because you’d have
brakes on the lead trailer, but not on the back one ... you know, under most
circumstances, you’d be alright, but if the roads were wet or if somebody
pulled out in front of you and you had to stop quickly ... and the thing that
amazed me the most about that is that another truck driver would know the
possible damage that could cause ...

Deliberate sabotage of equipment by male truckers was reported by only one woman trucker.

The misogynous actions of a small number of male truckers can cause real problems for
women truck drivers.

Women who drive alone are also susceptible to physical attack, especially at night.

One woman was sexually assaulted at work by a co-worker. Her story is recounted below.

One night when I was out by myself ... at one-thirty in the morning ... I had to
go out to this ... out to our warehouse ... you had to take freight for the next
morning out there ... so here I’m out there and I’m doing that and all of a
sudden this guy comes up behind me ... he had come in the front door, he had
a spare key, and just scared the daylights out of me! ... well, he came on
heavy duty and I, you know, like I just flipped right out on him ... like, he was
a young guy and everything, but still, I wasn’t interested in that, you know ...
I think I picked up ... I picked up a chain or I picked up a board or something ...
something I swung at him anyways ... anyway he left ... so I went in and
complained about it ... and management just said, "Okay, we’ll talk to him and
then we’ll make sure that you aren’t anywhere together or anything like that"
... you know, he didn’t get suspended or anything like that ... one of the other
women came along a couple of hours later and asked me what happened ... so
I told her and the same thing had happened to her ... and she had done the
same thing as I had and they hadn’t done anything to this guy about it ... they
told him to keep it in his pants! ... so I quit there ...

Male solidarity is evident in the remarks and actions of this manager. The underlying
patriarchal attitude that male employees are more valued, and the fact that the physical attacks
on the women drivers are not taken seriously, made these women very conscious of their gender and the precariousness of their position in this company.

However, another woman said that she complained about sexual harassment to management in another company and the "broker" was fired. At the same time, she did admit that he had a record of violations for impaired driving and harassment of other women, and her complaint was just one more strike against him in a long list of charges. Had this man been a good, productive worker, the likelihood that he would have been fired would have been reduced considerably. In any case, this is what she said

I had a guy fired, and he was a broker ... I was only working there I think for three years and I was loading for that company ... and he came on to me, exactly that, "Hey baby, meet me around the corner and we'll get in my bunk and we'll make some music" ... I said, "I ain't makin' no music with you at all" ... "I think you've got your mind in the wrong place ... my mind is signing my bills, I don't know where yours is at" ... and so then, I went to get back in my truck because they were on shift change ... and then he came out of the door and he unzipped his pants and took his pecker out and he whipped it at me ... so I was going to get my pipe and smash him ... so I figure, I'll do one better ... I phoned [his company] and got ahold of, I don't know the guy's last name, who was in the management of the trucking [firm], and I told him all about it, and then they put all these things against him together and fired him ... I says, "Thank you very much", I says, "I don't need this kind of harassment, I'm just trying to do a job, I don't need this guy coming on to me, telling me I should get in his bunk" ... and then his wife phones me up and tells me that it was my fault ... I just said to the woman, "He's the one that came on to me, I'm just minding my own business, he's the one that has to flap off, if you want to sue anybody, sue him, and leave me alone" ... so when I had him fired, that was the end ... and he never spoke to me ... to this day, if I see him, he won't even say a word ... he keeps right away ... he'll make a beeline around me now 'cause I pulled one over on him ...

One interesting aspect of this story is that the only retaliation this woman faced was from the wife of the harasser, who blamed this trucker for having her husband fired. When asked if she feared reprisal from the male trucker for her actions she said that she had support from other truck drivers because of the problems that they had also experienced with this man. She suggested that

He wouldn't because there's too many guys against him ... there's too many guys that know me that would stand up for me, not him ... but he used to steal chains and binders off people's trailers, and he got caught cornering a woman at [two other companies] ...
The antagonism of other male truck drivers to this broker gave this woman a sense of security and confidence that this man would not harass her again. Similarly, another woman said that she complained to her manager and obtained positive results. She said:

There was another guy and he was askin' me for a beer all the time ... be two o'clock and he'd be off duty ... he was always askin' me to go for a beer with him ... well, about the fifth time he asked me, I was gettin' sick of it ... he was a fat, bald-headed, little ... he just yelled, "Come on, let's go for a beer" ... well, I just got sick of it, you know, leave me alone, I've got my job to do, I'm goin' home ... and so, about the fifth time, I said somethin' to my manager ... I said, "Do you wanna do something about this dweeb in Windsor", and he said, "What's he doin'?", and I said, "Well, he keeps wantin' to take me for a beer and I'm gettin' sick of it!" ... I didn't mean for the manager to reprimand him ... but the guy never asked me again, so obviously, my manager put it through the channels that, you know, you just leave her alone, don't ask her ... she's doin' her job, just leave her alone ...

Reprimands by men who have authority over other men, therefore, can alleviate existing and potential problems that women are experiencing. However, many times the action that a manager takes, depends on the mixture of beliefs and attitudes that that particular individual may hold. Another woman relates the problems that she had with her personnel manager. She said:

The personnel manager there ... he's got a bad attitude! ... bad attitude towards women! ... and I was already there when he got in and he never hired another woman after me ... he used to pick on me for speeding ... you know, other people were [speeding] ... he would just pick, pick, pick ... or I'd really get bad loads ... and then they put me on flatbed for awhile thinking that I'd quit, and I didn't quit ... they won't hire a woman now and the reason he gave to someone was that, "How could I sleep at night when I know you're out driving a truck?" ... that was what he said to this one woman that applied there ...

The patriarchal attitudes and beliefs of this manager not only restricted access of other women to the company, but also resulted in harassment of the one woman driver that was already employed there. Harassment in this form is both class and gender related and is based on unequal positions of power, and results in the total effect of denigration of women as individuals and as workers. However, the majority of harassment faced by women truckers consists of verbal remarks, sexual innuendo, and propositions, and the language transmitted over the CB is a chief source of aggravation.
The CB

Because truckers spend most of their working hours on the road the CB provides a communication system that connects all truckers into an informal network. The CB provides a link for up-to-date information on highway closures, weather conditions, road construction, and accidents. Through the CB truckers are also warned as to which weigh scales are open and the location of police radar traps. The CB is also useful if the trucker has a breakdown on the side of the road. In addition, the CB is used as entertainment, a way to socialize with other truckers, and a method of breaking the monotony of a long trip.

Most of the women truckers listen to the CB so that they can take advantage of the information that comes across the channels, but very few of the women really feel comfortable speaking on the CB. Many of the women are intimidated by the language and derogatory remarks about other women that they hear on the CB. For these reasons the CB is viewed primarily as a male network, and the majority of the speaking is done by males.

When a woman's voice does come on the CB, male truckers habitually zero in on her and try to find out what vehicle she is driving, what direction she is going, and attempt to proposition her. One woman said

In this day and age, and as old as I am, I still have them make passes at me and give me those shy smiles ... oh yeah, and I think, 'Geez, you must be horny! ... like, what's your wife doing?' ... you get this attitude, like, you know, "You're hitting on me and like I'm over forty?" ...

The impression given by women truckers is that this behaviour is almost obligatory in the minds of some of the men. Another woman said

I think every guy thinks they have to come on to you at least once, and then once you let them know you're not interested, they'll just leave you alone ... they have a one-track mind, you know ... they are perverts! ... I don't know if it's so much time spent alone in the truck ... their mind goes wild, or what? ... but perverts .... on the radio too, you get a lot of lewd, I don't know how you say that, dirty talk and stuff like that ... I avoid that ...

Most of the women have become very adept at putting these men in their place, using language that the men can easily understand. Some pretend that their CB is not working and
that they cannot hear the conversation. Other women utilize a sense of humour as a means of resistance, and for these women, the CB can be a source of fun and relief from boredom.

One woman tells this story about a male trucker who was trying to proposition her.

Well I'd been following my husband ... he's in the truck and I'm in the car ... so anyways, this guy was yakin' and yakin' at me all the way down 401, and he's going, "Well, what are you driving?" ... and so I said, "A big green truck" ... and he gets up beside my husband and he says, "Hi" ... and my husband's got this mustache ... and the man goes, "You're not in there", and I said, "No, I was behind the truck you fool" ... and he wouldn't talk to me for five minutes he was so mad ...

A sense of humour is a definite asset in this occupation. Another pastime of male truckers is to talk about every woman that drives by and convey the description of the vehicle the woman is driving. Often there is nothing startling or unusual about the woman in the car and one of the women amusingly points out this fact when she says

It's funny 'cause a lot of the times you're drivin' along and you have the radio on, and guys'll just be hootin' and hollerin' ... at some girl that's driving along in the car, you know ... major commotion! ... it is, it's funny! ... you might not think about it but if you're wearing a skirt or something ... you wouldn't believe the commotion you can cause just by wearing a skirt in a car! ...

One explanation for this behaviour in men is that the boredom of the road results in this type of game playing between truckers in an effort to keep each other awake and alert. At the same time, this form of banter also promotes a form of male bonding.

Another woman tells how she deals with this behaviour when male truckers contact her truck about a passing female motorist. She says

One driver will always yell up ahead ... "Hey [company name], check out the red mustang that's comin' up" ... so I know what's comin' and I'm driving and I have several different replies ... one is, "She's not my type" ... and there's dead silence ... or I'll say, "What do you want us to look at? ... and he goes, "Nothing" ... I used to get angry ... so I had to start adding some humour in it to get myself so I didn't get mad about it ... I used to try to figure out to myself, "Well, why am I angry? Am I angry because there's no need for that? Am I angry because someone's not paying attention to me?" ... really, it kind of screws you up, you know! ... you really start wondering why, like what's going on, you know ... 

This woman was very conscious of her feelings of anger, although she did not understand that it was probably the objectification of women that bothered her the most. Many of the women
agreed that humour helps alleviate the tension, but one woman said, that "you gotta have an attitude on you ... take what they dish out and give it back". A couple of women mentioned turning into a mirror image of men who are rude to them. One woman said

I just sort of size them up first and listen to them ... how they're doing it ... and then I turn into them ... and actually what they're seeing is a reflection of themselves in a mirror, you know ... you get ignorant with me, well I can act just like you ... it worked really good ...

Many agreed that being assertive did help when dealing with men on the road, but not always. Almost all of the women have experienced verbal hostility from males over the CB. One woman tells this story.

There's one guy out there ... he hates women who are aggressive and that know how to drive a truck ... he said, "A woman's place is pregnant, barefoot, and in the kitchen at home doing dishes, laundry and washing floors" ... and I said, "So what do you do on your off time? ... I do that on my off time ... I work out here, and that's what I do on my off time" ... well that used to piss him off ... but really they're just creeps ...

Many of the women complain about patriarchal comments like this, but snappy retorts seem to be the best remedy. Another woman said

I've had guys say to me, like, "If you were my wife, you wouldn't be out here on the road, you know, you'd be home" ... I said, "Well, I guess I'm lucky I'm not your wife then!" ...

When men try to impose patriarchal beliefs and ideas on them and tell them that they belong in the home and not on the road, this is particularly infuriating for these women. One woman said

One of these hip-type guys, like, "I'm better than you, you can't do the job as well as me" ... he yelled out the window one day ... he says, "Why don't you go home and get barefoot and pregnant?" ... I said, "Why don't you support my kids!" ... he didn't say another word ... when he seen me again, he started talking to me and being nice, and I said, "You know, I'm doing the job as well as you, what gives you the right to tell me to go home? You can't handle it, get out of the kitchen, type thing, go away" ...

This woman is the sole provider for the family, as the man that she lives with has been unemployed for many years, and she supports both her own daughter and his son. Another
woman mentioned a reference to what some men perceive as a woman truck driver’s sexual orientation. She said

You do have to watch out ... there are people like that out there ... oh yeah, "Women shouldn’t be on the road", and "What the hell are you doin’ out here? No dishes to do? What’s the matter, don’t you have kids? Are you a lesbian?" ... oh yeah, only dykes are on the road! ... oh yes, a lot of bad attitude! ... but most of the guys are really nice ...

However, there are times when other male truckers come to the support of a woman trucker, especially if the harasser is being very ignorant and making lewd remarks. One woman said

If you ask something on the radio and somebody comes on and says something nasty like, "Get off the radio, bitch!" ... something really nasty, or worse ... somebody else ... you know, you don’t even see these people ... might say, "Oh, she’s only doing her job, leave her alone" ... and then the two of them will get into a fight ...

Several of the women mentioned this type of support from some men truckers. Another woman mentioned that some of the men are just lonesome and want to talk to a woman for a change. She said

You get a lot of guys ... they get bored out there ... a lot of guys, like, they’ve even said to me, "All I want is to just, you know, sometimes it’s just nice ... you talk to guys all the time, sometimes it’s nice to talk to a girl, you know, for a change" ...

The anonymity of the CB also provides an outlet for truckers to express their feelings. One woman said

You’ll end up talkin’ to them and they’ll end up telling you stuff that they wouldn’t tell their best friend ... you can use one another as sounding boards ...

Although there is some support on the road by male truckers for women truck drivers, many women are still not comfortable with the male CB network and choose not to take part in conversations unless the other trucker is someone they know personally. Few women feel comfortable participating in a network that embodies male culture in the form of sexist jokes, crude language and degrading remarks about women. At the same time, all of these women
have developed strategies of resistance for coping with the male culture of the trucking
industry.

Strategies of Resistance

Resistance to the male culture comes in various forms. For some women, avoidance
is one strategy, especially for those who are most uncomfortable with the lewd remarks, sexist
language and male traditions. For others a form of assimilation occurs, appropriating male
language and culture and using it as an empowering strategy for themselves. However, for
the majority of women, a variety of tactics are used in an attempt to differentiate themselves
from the men, but at the same time, allow themselves to be treated equally in the labour force.
The gender relations between women truck drivers and men truckers are crucial, but another
interesting way of coping with the male culture is symbolically, through the clothes that these
women wear.

Clothes

For those women who have experienced a great deal of harassment or are
uncomfortable with the male culture, the clothes that they wear are sometimes bulky, in an
attempt to hide their sexuality. One woman said

I don’t know if it’s guys gawking at me all the time ... I always wear baggy
clothes ... always wear baggy shirts ... I feel totally uncomfortable if I’m
wearing a tight t-shirt or a tank top ... I never wear a tank top ... I never wear
short-shorts ... and summertime ... a lot of times, you know, the pedal-pushers
that came in last year ... I wear those, they’re cooler ... it’s not inviting
anything, but it’s avoiding trouble ... I don’t like when guys gawk, period, so
I just don’t dress for it ...

Another woman said that she always wears a sweater over her shirt, especially when she gets
out of the truck. She says

I always have on a sweater ... I imagine I’ll always wear the sweater ... when
I pull in the yard in the summertime, even if it’s hot in the truck ... I might take
a sweater off while I’m driving, but once I get into the yard, I put my sweater
back on ... I'm a firm believer in "there's no need to flaunt it" when you don't want the attention ...

Another woman that hauls sides of beef wears clothes that she feels are appropriate for that job. She says

With being women ... you give up some things, like fingernails, hand care, almost personal hygiene to a degree ... you're always wearing grubby clothes, you know ... you have no choice really because you get grubby, you know, you get dirty ... carrying meat, you get covered in blood ...

Similarly, a woman who hauls steel said

I dress like the guys ... so I have the old, you know, checkered woodsman shirt on ... full of grease from tarps ... and you can't tell with a hard hat on what you are ... I dress this way because this way I don't ruin a lot of clothes 'cause the grease from the tarps does not come out ... like with your work boots, it eats them right away ...

In comparison, another woman who hauls steel describes her working clothes as follows

In the summertime, I dress ... you know those velour one-piece things we wear ... up to here [strapless top with short shorts] ... that's my normal dress for the summer ... or I've got tops ... not the tight-fitting tops, but like the blousey top ... but there again, velour or terry cloth ...

This trucker is very comfortable with both the male culture of the trucking industry and her own sexuality.

However the majority of women are very conscious of the way they dress and try to avoid clothes that draw attention to their bodies. They become annoyed with women who use their sexuality to get around the heavy work or to avoid certain aspects of the job. As one woman said

There was one female driver in tractor trailer, and she did nothing but "shag the dog" ... well, she'd sit there and she'd bat her eyes and all the men would load the truck ... she was about as useful to us as nothing, you know ...

Another woman said

There was one girl ... she had short, short shorts on ... she bent over, you seen it all nearly ... and I'm tellin' you, these guys are glad to see that ... it's like, you know, it's like a fly to meat on a table ... they just gotta get there ... you wanna know how she gets loaded and unloaded, just dress like a tramp ...
However, the majority of women truckers wear jeans or long shorts and shirts. Another woman said

I wear jeans or else I wear long shorts ... I’ve seen people get out in miniskirts and things, and you know, you’re just asking for trouble ... I don’t camouflage though, you know, because why should we ... we’re women and we’re doing a job ... I am partial to pink, so I do wear pink, you know ...

The colour pink or pastel shades often appear in descriptions of clothing. Another woman was adamant about wearing pink. She said

I have this thing about pink ... I always wear pink when I’m driving ... I’ve always had a pink top on when I’m driving the truck ... to advertise that there is a female driving this truck ... that’s the only reason why ... that is exactly why I wear pink all the time ... I even have pink and grey work socks ...

The symbolic use of the colour pink is frequently employed, perhaps not as consciously as the woman above, but as a means to differentiate women from men in the industry. Being different because of their gender is very important for the majority of these women. Another woman has a very pragmatic approach to clothing. She says

I wear what I’m comfortable in ... now obviously those things that other women wear, like the bulky shirts so they won’t be recognized, that makes them more comfortable ... but hey, my opinion is we’re women out there, we’re doing the same job as the men ... by and large, I’m sure most of us are getting the same money, you know ... be comfortable with what you got, but also be comfortable with your sexuality ... hey, I wear this thing open [top two or three buttons of her shirt] and I have, like, little lacey bras and if somebody gets a flash of a little lacey bra, that only reminds them that, yeah, there are women out there, so watch your language, watch what you do, you know ... and I feel really comfortable with what I’m doing and I feel sorry for the women who try and hide their sexuality, ‘cause you can’t deny it ...

However, one woman whose company has been using uniforms for years, does try to disguise the differences between women and men. She gave this rendition of the rules and regulations that she is required to follow.

Well, with us it’s a lie ... either you wear your hair up or you wear it short ... I just cut mine all cut off ... I had it long before ... I was protesting ... like you can be a woman, but you have to look like a man ... it is very much designed after the military ... and you have to wear it up or short ... ‘cause they want everybody to look the same ... two guys got fired, in fact, for having an earring ... it’s an old, old company ... very conservative too ...
The uniforms that her company uses are exactly the same for women and men except that the women’s uniforms have puffy shoulders. In this regard, many companies are now switching to uniforms for their truck drivers, as an attempt to clean up the image of truck drivers in general. However, clothes are only one form of resistance; another strategy is evident in the gender relations between women and men in the industry.

**Gender Relations Between Women Truck Drivers and Male Truckers**

Depending on the individual woman, the amount of harassment she has experienced, her compatibility with the male culture, her mood at that particular time, and the circumstances, different strategies for resisting and coping in a male-dominated workplace are employed. One strategy of resistance to rude remarks and sexist comments is to ignore the offensive perpetrators. As one woman said:

> Well, a lot of times, I just walk away mumbling and grumbling .. I just walk away and let them chatter because sometimes a lot of these people, like men ... the more you talk to them in rude ways, the more they love it, so you just keep on goin’ ... the only way is to walk away ... that hurts them worse than talkin’ to them ... 

Another more subtle strategy, which can at times be an indirect form of confrontation, is based on a sense of humour. Many of the women are aware of the importance of joking and teasing in this occupation. One woman said:

> You have to have a sense of humour, you know ... you have to be able to know how to laugh at yourself ... if you didn’t, you’d never make it ... 

Another woman suggested that it was important to participate and integrate into the male culture, including the joking and sexual innuendo. She said:

> Guys are notorious for teasin’, you know, and if you’re gonna get mad about it, they’re gonna tease you all the more ... 

She also suggested that:

> You don’t put up with it, you go along with it ... you enjoy men ... if you’re gonna be in their workforce, you learn to ... you enjoy them ... you have fun with them ... you tease them, but you know when to stop, you know ...
At least partial assimilation into the male culture is evident among many women truck drivers. However, there are times when another strategy is required and that involves direct confrontation and asserting oneself. As one woman said:

I tell them to either shut up or I’ll leave, you know, sort of thing ... but most of the guys I work with, like, are pretty easy-going, and they basically know their limit with me ‘cause I let them know ... if you let them know your point of view, like, they don’t ... but then, there’s always the odd one who pushes it ... you always get snide remarks, sort of thing ...

The ability of some of the women to confront men and turn a bad situation around is something that is learned. One woman tells of the process of growing assertive, and even aggressive, after many years in the business. She says:

See, it’s been such a long period of time for me ... yes, I have become more assertive, at times I have become what I would personally consider aggressive ... you can say all you want to, but if men aren’t listening, they’re not listening ... therefore, you have to talk to them on their own terms ... and unfortunately, if that means looking them straight in the eye and stating your case and then saying, "Fine" ... I have had this where I’ve had to confront a man and they’ve looked at me, and as a lot of men do, they hem and haw, and I’ve pointedly looked at my watch and said, "Fine, you got three minutes to answer because I don’t want any skirting around ... I want the answer to the question ... if I didn’t want to know, I wouldn’t ask" .... so basically I have toughened over a long period of time ... like I told you, the first stage I went through was politeness and answering all these inane questions, the second was disgust, and now I’m only amused ... I’ve just heard it so long that aah! ... you know, these people, they’re the same loonies, but you’re only being a little more diplomatic because you’ve heard it all before ... but for the most stupid questions you get out there, I’ve probably got most of the answers ... there’s not an awful lot that shocks me any more, surprisingly ...

Learning to be more assertive develops over time when a woman works in a male-dominated occupation. Another woman also reiterated how she had changed and become more confident. She said:

When I started, I was very nervous and shy and self-conscious and worried about making a mistake and looking like a fool, but I’ve seen enough men making a lot of silly mistakes that I don’t feel bad ... you know, if anyone thinks that way, they just have a shallow mind, I figure ... I got more confidence now but I think it’s just because I’m older ...

The process of changing and becoming more assertive over time is one way in which these women have survived in an occupation that has been arbitrarily classified as a man’s job.
The strategies of resistance—whether they are avoidance or assimilation into the male culture, direct confrontation, the use of a sense of humour, ignoring sexist remarks, or wearing a certain type of clothes—they are all part of the struggle against the patriarchal atmosphere of the trucking industry. However, male culture at the informal level of organization is only one manifestation of patriarchal relations within the trucking culture, in which the sexualized atmosphere of the workplace is reinforced by the sights and distractions on the road.

Distractions on the Road

For long distance drivers, the truck is their home for five or six days out of each week. Truckers are on the road at strange hours and often have to catch a few hours sleep in their bunks at rest areas and truck stops, where a whole sexual subculture exists, of which many people outside the trucking industry are unaware. Both long distance drivers and short run truckers occasionally witness some strange and often sexual displays that occur in vehicles on the road, both in the daytime and in the middle of the night. These digressions are both entertaining and annoying, especially if the trucker is trying to stay awake and keep a truck on the road at the same time. However, the reality is that there are people who go out in cars and small vehicles to intentionally tantalise and divert the trucker's attention from the task at hand.

"Four Wheelers"

The name that truckers give to people who drive cars and smaller vehicles is "four wheelers". During the daytime, "four wheelers" can be a major source of annoyance when they cut in front of trucks, tailgate and pull off entrance ramps at twenty miles an hour. But at night, truckers see different types of people in cars on the highway. There are people who drive up in the lane beside a truck, and as soon as they get to the end of the trailer, they switch on the interior light so that the trucker can see inside the car. Since the truck driver
is up very high in her cab, she can look down directly into the car. A few of the stories are related below. All are told by women truck drivers. One woman said

Women will drive down the road with nothing on ... in their cars ... and if it’s at night, they’ll flip the interior light on and drive beside the truck for so long, or they’ll have a CB in their car and say, "Hey baby, what do ya think, you wanna stop at the next stop?" ... this happened to a guy we know and he said this woman ... you couldn’t tell her boobs from her stomach ... everything kind of blended in ... and she come on the CB ... well, he heard these guys talking about this woman, and so he gets on the CB and he thought he’s goin’ to be smart, eh ... he says, "Where is this little sweetheart ‘cause they’re sayin’ she’s really sexy and the whole bit" ... well, when she come up along side of him, he said, "She’s wokin’ and she’s smilin’ and she’s talking to him on the CB", and she says, "Well, you wanna stop at the next truck stop honey?" ... and he says, "Uh no, my wife’s in the bunk sleepin’ ... I think you better keep on going" ... his wife wasn’t in the bunk sleeping but he said she was ...

Another woman tells this story.

This woman was yakin’ for miles on the radio ... and you could hear yakin’ and yakin’ behind me .... and she’s going, "Well you guys, you wanna see something really good?" ... and I never said a word ... my husband, he never talked the whole time either ... so she says, "Hey [company name] driver, do you wanna see somethin’ really good?" ... and I never said a word, and she gets up beside me, turns her light on ... and the windows are really dark on the other truck that we were driving, so I wound down the window and turned my interior light on after she is sitting there, and she flashes me her boobs ... and the look on her face when she seen it was mel ... and the guys are all going, "Well, what did she show ya?" ... and I said, "Nothing, just her tits and it didn’t turn me on at all!" ... she never said a word for the next fifty miles ...

However, it is not just at night that truckers see these sights. Many times during the daylight hours, people will go out on the highway putting on exhibitions for the truckers’ benefit. One trucker said that she actually knew a woman who owned a corvette and went out on the highway purposely to entertain the truckers. She said

I met a girl ... what she liked doing in the summer was wearing skimpy things and driving her corvette up and down the 401 and waving to truckers ... and I said, "You, you do things like this?" ... and she had long blonde hair, wasn’t too terribly bad looking, had a nice little figure and she said this is what she likes to do ... she said, "Oh yeah, well I know it’s boring out on the road, so I like to give them something to look at" ... and I thought, God, there are women out there who do this! ...

Couples also engage in sexual activities in their cars on the highway. This same woman said
Oh, I've seen people fondling each other going down the road, you know ... there's a guy and a girl and she's got his member out and she's playin' with it and goofin' off, you know ... or the woman's had her blouse down a little bit and the guy's feeling her breasts a little bit ... you get used to this, after the initial shock wears off ... you see it, I wouldn't say often, but after seeing it a few times, you think, oh right, they're havin' a good time, you know ... Many times people in cars do not realize that the trucker can see almost the entire inside of their vehicle. However, the most common stories were related to men in cars and smaller vehicles. One of the women truckers told this story about a male in a car.

As soon as the nose of the truck comes up to this little yellow car, the guy turns the interior light on ... and I swear he didn't have no pants on ... and he had it out and he was stroking it ... but I couldn't believe that this man was driving around with no pants on, and he was only doing it for truck drivers ...

For male truckers, an experience like this can be almost as unnerving as it is for the woman trucker. One woman recalled an experience that happened to her husband. She said

My husband was driving and I was sleeping ... I wasn't even in the front and this guy came up beside him and he was wearing a ... he was wearing a suit and he had a sunroof in his pick-up and ... he said he was weird because he had his cap ... he had a cap on ... a two-piece suit and a cap ... and he had his cap turned back, pulled right down on his head like that ... he was lookin' up at my husband through his sunroof and just grinning and started playing with himself and stuff ... my husband, just, oh he just, "Get away from me!" ...

However, for the woman trucker who sees this activity for the first time while she is driving, the experience is very shocking and can be dangerous for all people involved. This same woman said

There's some real sickos out there! ... the first time that ever happened to me ... we were coming back from Chicago and I had heard about this but I had never experienced it, right ... I was driving along, minding my own business ... my husband was in the passenger seat reading, and I noticed, out of the corner of my eye ... I noticed that this car was staying right beside me, so I looked over and there was this older guy ... like, you know, he must have been in his fifties ... just grinning and masturbating, and I was so outraged! ... the first thought that entered my mind was, "Get away from me!", and I cranked it over into his lane and ran him right off the road ... and my husband said, "What are you doing?" ... and I just ... my heart was pounding so hard 'cause I realized ... I looked in my mirror and I saw he just went in the median and stopped ... he didn't hit anything ... I said, "I didn't mean to run him off the road, but I just looked over and he was leering up at me there, and he just, you know, and I just went, "Get away from me!" ...
Several women related stories about men in trucks and cars. However, "four wheelers" are not the only ones who supply the truckers with tales to tell. A female flasher who hitch-hikes along 401 was seen by one of the women truck drivers. She said

A girl used to hitch-hike on 401 with no clothes on and a long coat ... because I seen it firsthand ... she'd have boots on or shoes, and when the trucks came up to her she'd open up her coat and show you what she had and then close it ... and a lot of guys, they'd pull over and pick her up ...

Another woman related a story about a prostitute called "401 Rosie" who works out of truck stops along highway 401. However, the majority of stories about prostitution are centred around rest areas and truck stops in the United States. Prostitution at truck stops and rest areas has become a major concern for both truckers and police. Male truckers have given these prostitutes the name, "lot lizards" and refer to the rest areas as "pickle parks".22

"Lot Lizards and Pickle Parks"

All of the women in this study who drive stateside have encountered prostitutes in rest areas and truck stops. Apparently prostitutes have been roaming these parking lots for years but the name "lot lizards" is fairly recent.23 One person suggested that the name came into being a few years ago. Prostitutes are brought into the rest areas by their pimps by the carload, and they knock on the doors of the truck and persist until somebody answers their call. For the trucker who only has a few hours to catch up on some much needed sleep, "lot lizards" can be very annoying. Many of the women truckers talk about the persistence of the prostitutes. One woman said

They came to the door and banged on the side of the truck ... I was with my husband and my husband told them to go once and she came back a little while later and I had just gotten to sleep ... so I just sat up and told her he was taken and not to ever show her face back here again ... a lot of them figure that if they bug you enough and keep you awake that you're going to let them in ...

Women truck drivers have also been solicited by female prostitutes. One trucker tells this story

I stopped at a rest area and two women walked around to the front of the truck ... they came up to the side and she said, "Do you want a date?" ... and
I said, "Not really, you might ask the truck in front of me ... there might be a man in there" ... she said, "Oh, you can have us, two for the price of one"

In addition, there are now male prostitutes at these rest areas and truck stops, although they are engaged mainly in homosexual activity. The truckers refer to male prostitutes as "buffalos". Another woman said

There's men out there doing it too, at truck stops and that too ... they're called "buffalos" ... some of the things that go on out there are just unbelievable, you know ... you start hearing guys calling for another guy, like for a "buffalo", you know ...

Prostitution has become such a problem that police are now patrolling rest areas and signs have been posted. The signs resemble "no smoking" signs, but in the middle there is a lizard rather than a cigarette. Small adhesive stickers can also be bought at truck stops that can be easily applied to windows of trucks (see Appendix F for a copy of two "no lot lizard" stickers). Some of the truckers hang brassieres in the window to try to keep the prostitutes away.

The large truck stops are now taking steps in an attempt to prevent prostitution on their lots. One woman described what was now happening in the States. She said

A lot of truck stops are being patrolled now ... or they have the lots fenced up and four wheelers cannot get into them, and neither can lot lizards ... a lot of them have a sign in their parking lot saying "No lot lizards" ... a lot of places, like I said, they'll have signs up or they'll have police patrolling all of the time because it's really bad for drugs ... and right on the CB they'll be openly selling women or buying and selling drugs ...

The risk of disease does not seem to deter either the prostitutes or their male clients, even though more than one woman trucker mentioned that the prostitutes "don't clean themselves; they just go from one truck to another". One truck driver refers to these areas as "AIDS stations". Indeed, another trucker mentioned a police alert as they were entering a truck stop. She said

We were in Tennessee and pulling in this truck stop and the cops came over the CB asking all the truck drivers, "Please be on alert, there's a local prostitute there who does the truck drivers" ... and they were saying she escaped from them ... they were on the way taking her to the hospital 'cause she's confirmed to have AIDS ... and they're saying, "Do not come in contact with her, or if she's in your truck, please call us right now ... call Channel 9, we're
right here sitting" ...this went on for like an hour, they were trying to find her ...

For some women truckers, the sight of these young women prostitutes is very difficult to witness. One woman became extremely upset when seeing them. She said

Some of them are like children ... I get really upset because they’re very, very young ... like, I don’t think they’re more than ten or twelve years old ... I’ve seen them ... I’ve been to the point where I was crying ...

Some woman experience real pain in the fact that their own gender has been attacked and debased. Other women choose to disassociate themselves, to think of these prostitutes as something other than women. Many feel disgust and annoyance. However, because a distorted version of women’s sexuality is prominent in these rest areas and truck stops, which manifests itself in female prostitution, the real danger for the woman truck driver is being mistaken for a “lot lizard”. Indeed, one trucker did mention being approached for sex. She said

When my husband and I were running team ... well, he likes to play video games, where I would rather go downtown shopping or something ... at the truck stops, he’d play video games and I’d go play some video games ... and I’ve had guys come over and ask me if I was interested in making some money, you know ... you know, the one guy came over and he didn’t notice that we were together, and he came over and I was just ... this was the first time that anybody had approached me like this and I was, like, shocked ... I just looked at him and I think the look on my face had already told him that he had asked the wrong girl, right ... and then I said, “I don’t think my husband would appreciate that” ... and he said, “Is your husband ... are you married?”, and I said, “Yes I am, my husband’s right over there” ... and he said, “I’m really sorry, I’m really sorry”, and he walked away ... but he just assumed because there is a lot of them there ... a girl that seems on her own there, unless she’s a driver, she’s a “lot lizard”, you know ...

This same woman told an even more horrifying story of a woman trucker who was mistaken for a “lot lizard” and arrested by the police. She said

This guy said ... he was in one truck stop ... and he actually saw a girl ... she was a driver ... she drove with her husband and they had gone to the truck for the night and he was asleep and she ... apparently she had to use the washroom and she didn’t take her purse or anything inside ‘cause she was just goin’ to the bathroom ... and because there was so many “lot lizards” out there that the cops assumed, she was a woman, she was a “lot lizard” ... and they went over and they put her under arrest, and well, they wanted to see I.D. ... well, she didn’t have any I.D ... she said, “It’s in my truck”, and they wouldn’t
The sexual undercurrent that exists in truck stops and rest areas, as well as in vehicles that truckers see on the road, reinforces the male culture in which these women must work. However, the male culture in the workplace has the same effect of devaluing women, although on a different level. Verbal abuse and harassment, even when sporadic, can have the effect of isolating some women truckers from their co-workers. At the same time, positive support from other male truckers for their female counterparts in the industry has enabled these women to survive for fairly lengthy periods of time.

Conclusions

Within the patriarchal capitalist structure of the trucking industry, there exists a mixture of beliefs and attitudes about women's rights and abilities to perform the job of truck driver. Not all male truck drivers resist encroachment by women into their line of work. However, because the traditional male culture still persists, the informal networks often construct barriers to women's participation. A small minority of men still embrace patriarchal attitudes and beliefs that women should not do this type of work, and are therefore antagonistic toward women truck drivers. Unfortunately it is often the ones who disagree or feel threatened the most who protest the loudest. The language that these male truckers use, the sexual innuendoes, and the debasement of women in general, leave some women truck drivers with a sense that they don't belong. As a consequence, they consciously practice self-exclusion from the informal male network that exists among male truck drivers.
At the same time, a larger number of men truck drivers are either supportive or remain neutral towards women truck drivers. These men are believed to have a mixture of beliefs, or a customized gender consciousness, much like that of women truck drivers. Women truckers possess a blend of beliefs and attitudes surrounding gender. While some adhere to more feminist ideas than others, and some hold more patriarchal views than the rest, these women are not a homogeneous group. In fact, each individual has her own combination of feminist and patriarchal beliefs, and together these women comprise a range of people who have customized gender consciousness.

The next, concluding chapter will address the continuum of beliefs and ideas that exist between traditional gender consciousness and feminist consciousness. The mixture of beliefs, known as customized gender consciousness, will then be compared to feminist consciousness. The implications of this theory of customized gender consciousness will also be addressed in regard to further research.
Notes

1. The exclusion of women from informal networks is not confined to blue-collar jobs. Any occupation where the demographic composition of the workplace is primarily male is susceptible to viewing women as "other". E. Wilbur Bock has an excellent article called "The Female Clergy: A Case of Professional Marginality", pp. 66-77 in Ronald M. Pavalko (ed.), Sociological Perspectives on Occupations, 1972. Similarly, Cynthia F. Epstein discusses the importance of informal networks and women's exclusion from these channels of opportunity in her article entitled, "Encountering the Male Establishment: Sex-Status Limits on Women's Careers in the Professions", in the same book edited by Pavalko, Sociological Perspectives on Occupations, pp. 364-381.

2. For information on sex-typing of occupations, see Cynthia F. Epstein's article "Encountering the Male Establishment: Sex-Status Limits on Women's Careers in the Professions", pp. 364-381 in Ronald M. Pavalko (ed.), Sociological Perspectives on Occupations, 1972; and Ann Game & Rosemary Pringle, Gender at Work, 1983.

3. See the introduction of Gender at Work, 1983, by Ann Game and Rosemary Pringle for a review of gender and power relations at work.


8. Ibid.


11. Ibid., p. 76.


13. A change in some men’s attitudes towards women in non-traditional occupations when they are exposed to females for long periods of time, has been documented in many stories of women in non-traditional work, including Jennifer Penney’s book, Hard Earned Wages: Women Fighting for Better Work, 1983; and Mary Lindenstein Walshok’s book, Blue-Collar Women: Pioneers on the Male Frontier, 1981.

14. This woman belonged to a union so she did have recourse through union channels. However, she inquired about becoming a union steward herself and the person she asked never got back to her about it.


19. Resistance is defined very broadly in this chapter to emphasize the survival strategies of working within a male-dominated occupation. In this sense, resistance includes everything from avoidance or withdrawal from the group to appropriation of male language as an empowering or coping technique.

20. The regulations surrounding uniforms in this corporation contradict what Christine L. Williams describes in her book entitled, Gender Differences at Work: Women and Men in Nontraditional Occupations, 1989, when she describes the uniforms of the marines. Women marines have a different uniform than the men, which includes skirts, and
every attempt is made to make certain that they are easily distinguished from the male marines.


22. One woman said that prostitutes at truck stops and rest areas are also called "commercial coin-operated beaver" by truckers. Another trucker told me that rest areas are called "pickle parks" because "That's where the guys get their 'pickles' out".

23. Most of the women truckers did not know the origin of the name, but there were some interesting speculations. Some truckers said it was because the prostitutes look so slimy and sleazy. Others said that when you're sitting high up in a truck, these women darting around down below look like lizards. However, the most colourful story about the origin of the name came from a woman who said:

The "lot" is because it's a large area ranging from ten acres to I don't know how many ... and the "lizard" is because ... if you've ever had a lizard as a pet, it's there ... you can get lizards in many different colours and they don't necessarily go away ... they're very persistent, they come for a nibble and they go and come for another nibble and then they go ... and if you pet them nicely, then they stay, you know, like a good little pet would.

Chapter Nine

Conclusions

I don’t need my door opened for me or anything like that ... I'm capable of doing that myself ... I like, every once in awhile, to have flowers ... I never get them, but I don’t mind having flowers brought to me ... I like gettin' my hair done and I like buying nice clothes and dressing up ... but I also love puttin’ on the jeans and work boots and truckin’, you know ... so I like pretty, nice things, but I don’t need to be catered on ... I don’t keep a role model for a man either ... like, I don’t expect a man to be a breadwinner ... I don’t expect this and that, but I do believe in respect ... I think both sexes need to respect each other and the world would be a much better place ... so as far as being a feminist, I don’t know ... do you think that I am? ... I don’t think strongly ...

These comments made by a woman truck driver who now manages her father’s trucking company reflect the confusion that has resulted from a society that has experienced a rapid transition in gender relations since the advent of the second wave of the women’s movement in the 1960s. Feminist beliefs in the right to work in nontraditional occupations such as truck driving and the dismissal of the male breadwinner norm have been adopted, but uncertainty still exists around gender images of femininity, sexuality and privileges that should or should not be accorded to women. Some women truck drivers have borrowed many beliefs and ideas from the feminist movement, but still cling to certain values from patriarchal ideology. At the other extreme, some women truckers remain more committed to the values and attitudes that are common in patriarchal ideology, and the only feminist ideal that they accept is the right of women to work at any job they are capable of performing regardless of gender stereotypes for that occupation. The combination of feminist and patriarchal beliefs and ideas, which I have called "customized gender consciousness", varies with each person and changes at different points in each individual’s life to justify her material existence.
Customized gender consciousness, therefore, encompasses a whole range or continuum of beliefs and ideas, which are sometimes overlapping and often very complex. For some women truckers, integration into the patriarchal male culture, replete with macho attitudes and behaviour, is part of their lifestyle. One woman suggested that she has taken on an ego that is very much like that of the men with whom she works. She said

My ego's become as much as a man's ... and that's really hard because, you know, women don't have egos, and it's just ... oh, ego's a hard thing! ... it can control you ... well a good example was .... I came along and I decided last fall, "I'm going to buy a motorcycle" ... I saw a girl one day down at the reserve and she was riding a Harley and she looked so cool, you know ... so I went down to the States and I looked the whole time we were down in California for a bike ... they're really expensive down there, so I didn't get a bike ... so then I came along and got this deal on this little Yamaha, so I bought it .... everybody, they gave me such a hard time ... "A Yamaha ... your husband wouldn't let you have a Harley, would he?" ... and all this ... Oh! ... I came home that night and I says, "I gotta buy a Harley!" [laughs] ... I said, "I can't live with it ... I'm embarrassed by this bike ... I gotta buy a Harley!", you know ... and it's just ... you build up the ego of a man ... you know, workin' with them all the time ... you just get to have the same problems, you know ... they all come in and they say, "Oh, my wife, naggin' and bitchin' at me about this", you know ... and I go, "Yeah, my husband's naggin' and bitchin' ... and I don't go home and I get nag, nag, nag", you know ... it all becomes the same ... it's funny ... the sexes aren't that different ... you know, the problems are really the same ...

This woman often accompanies her male co-workers to strip joints after work, but at the same time, she is very aware of sexual harassment and discrimination against women in her own workplace. Contradictory beliefs and attitudes, borrowed from two competing ideologies, are not unusual for women truck drivers.

For a few women truck drivers, the adoption of feminist beliefs is more extensive and involves concrete action against men who oppress women. For example, one woman went to the defense of another woman who was faced with an abusive husband. She said

When a trucker's abusing his wife ... it's very hard for me to stand back ... I went and got the hammer ... and I said, "One more time, you say anything to her ... and if you hit her, so help me god, I'll get you with the hammer!" ... I went and got it and my husband said, "You better go sit in the truck" ... honest to god, I went and got the hammer! ... and this guy just looked at me and I thought, 'You big, fat, old man, I'm gonna get you good!' ... and his wife, she was just bawlin' ... they were old people ... like, older people ... I think she was more embarrassed that he treated her and talked to her and
slapped her the way he did ... and I said, "You ever do that to her again, especially if I'm there" ... you know, and I just freak! ... I hate men that do that! ... and you know, she wasn't doing anything ... she was trying to help him and he got ignorant with her and smacked her ... and I said, "That did it!" ... I just have no use for men who beat women up! ...

This trucker took action to try to prevent an abusive truck driver from beating his wife. At the same time, the division of labour in her own home is very traditional, and while she recognizes and resents the inequitable balance in household responsibilities between herself and her husband, no effort has been made to resolve the double day of labour with which she is burdened.

Consequently, the similarities and contradictions between customized consciousness and feminist consciousness will be addressed briefly in the following section, and represent my personal interpretation, taken from what I have observed and heard in discussions with these women. These comments are written in the hope that an attempt to understand the commonalities and differences between feminists and women truck drivers may in some way bridge the gap between these two groups of women.

The Dialectic Between Customized Gender Consciousness and Feminism

The most obvious commonality between women truck drivers and feminists, aside from gender, is their belief that women should have the right and choice to enter any occupation that they are qualified to perform. However, even when there is agreement with regard to equality in the workplace, there are underlying political and class differences between feminists and women truck drivers that separate the two groups. First of all, although women truckers are concretely challenging the gendered division of labour through the work they do, they are not necessarily conscious of the changes they are making for other women. In contrast, feminists are consciously working for change for women both collectively and individually. Women truckers, on the other hand, whether consciously or not, are affecting change in attitudes, behaviours, and images surrounding the appropriateness of traditionally prescribed
"men's jobs", but they are doing it on an individual basis through their actions. The isolation of women truck drivers from each other because of their minute numbers and the structure of their work, inhibits a collective gender consciousness among these women.

In addition, whereas women truck drivers affect change concretely through their work, feminists attempt to make changes for women both concretely through their work and through lobbying, as well as abstractly, through their writings and the ideas that they transmit in their everyday life and in the media. At this point, class differences come into play. The majority of feminists are middle-class women, who perhaps have the time, resources, connections or status through their education to receive attention from the media. Through the media, feminists attempt to convey their values, beliefs and ideas by way of discussions surrounding gender issues. For working class women, such as truck drivers, who have extremely long work days, very little leisure time, and minimal access to the media, feminists are seen as "all talk and no action". When asked what bothers them about feminists, a few truckers responded saying, "they make a big stink about it! ... they broadcast it! ... they're too mouthy!". One trucker felt that feminists have been harmful to women. She said

In a lot of ways this women's movement has hurt us ... they're too noisy ... don't just sit there and talk about it and say, "Thank you for sharing" ... go out and do the darn thing ... don't talk about it! ... you know they say actions speak louder than words ... shut up and get on with it! ... they don't realize that we ... you know, women truckers don't come home and swill beer or sit in a closet until their next run ... we have lives ... and I think if you talk to a lot of, like, of the real feminists ... they wake, they sleep, they eat, they breathe feminism ... they're actually quite paranoid, I think ... they're looking for the slightest little rude remark that would set them off ... they're lookin' for trouble ... like, go out and do the job and don't look for trouble, it'll come to you soon enough ...

Underlying these statements is a feeling that feminists do not understand the everyday lives of truck drivers. In this regard, these women have more of an affinity with working class men than they do with feminists and perhaps even women in traditional female occupations. As one trucker said

Women talk to me, but I think ... they don't care whether or not you had seventy-two thousand on, you know what I mean ... the women don't care
whether or not you had to hand bomb a load of fly-swatters, right ... you know, it's not a big thing with them ... but men could understand that and say, "Oh, you gotta be kidding! Four hours of that!" ... you get your sympathy that you needed ... so of course, yeah, you'd rather talk to men 'cause they understand what you're saying ...

A shared understanding with working class men is recognized and class boundaries are constructed between women in nontraditional jobs such as truck driving and feminists. One trucker also suggested that feminists had created more work for women. She said

Some feminists need the two-by-four lesson, I really do believe .... they've screwed up so much for us ... my standard anecdote is for thousands of years, women have been the power behind the throne ... we say, "Dear, take out the garbage, dear take out the garbage, dear take out the garbage" ... and the men would look up from their newspapers or their whittling or their stone throwing, depending on the era, and they'd say, "Why goddamned bitch!" ... but they'd go out and take out the darn garbage or they'd throw it in the kitchen bin or whatever ... now these women's libbers ... you say, "Dear, take out the garbage", and they say, "You're a libber, do it yourself!" ... we never had to do that until these guys [feminists] opened their mouths, you know ... now seriously, I'm a serious believer ... they have screwed us up because I've been doing all this stuff for so many years, without the benefit of all these people ... like, I was doing all this before, you know, all the big bra burning stuff came in ...

Truckers, especially those who have been in the business a long time, credit their success to individual perseverance and hard-earned recognition. Acknowledgment of the lobbying of government by women's groups and pressure to change attitudes and behaviours within society is not realized. Moreover, the intentions of feminists to redistribute the workload more equitably between women and men has become distorted through the media and over time.

The unfortunate reality is that the problems that women face, including truck drivers, are endemic across classes, and one way of confronting the issues that are harmful to women is to vocalize and make public the information, in the attempt to alert others to the inequalities and the damaging effects on women. The ironic twist of taking serious issues such as wife battery or sexual assault to the media is that feminists who denounce violence against women publicly are often brandished as 'man haters' and a backlash occurs against feminism. Another trucker said
Like, I didn’t get into this job to prove that I’m ... you know, that I can ... I’m not a man hater! ... like, there are some of them that I don’t like very much, yeah, but ... I wouldn’t call myself a feminist ... I believe in equality, but I don’t believe ... like I don’t get mad if somebody opens a door for me ... like, I’m not a bra burner! ...

The reference to ‘bra burners’ recurred a few times during conversations with truck drivers. Fortunately, there were only a few truckers who felt really antagonistic towards feminists. While the majority stated that they weren’t feminists, a few admitted being a feminist "to a point". One trucker said

I consider myself a feminist to a point, like I’m not ... I’m not like a lot of women ... they won’t even accept compliments from guys because ... male chauvinism! ... I like compliments and if anybody ever gives me a compliment, I go, "Thank you" ... it makes me feel good, you know ... compliments from a girl, compliments from a guy, it doesn’t matter ...

For some truckers, a real anxiety over losing the privileges that have traditionally been accorded to women, such as receiving compliments and having cigarettes lit, was stated. For example, one woman said

I like having my cigarettes lit for me ... I love having doors opened for me and I love being treated like a lady ... but don’t let ‘em be too slow about it ‘cause I’ll do it myself, and boy, you won’t get anywhere ...

Acknowledgement of the little perks that have been traditionally expected by women, such as having doors opened for them, was repeated several times by different truckers. But more than anything, a sincere desire to be different from men, to be treated "like a lady", recurred in these interviews. As one woman said

I consider myself a lady, okay ... I don’t use ... necessarily use foul language ... I manicure my nails ... I’m due for a perm ... I do wear make-up ... and I love the money I make drivin’ a truck ...

The fundamental issue of sexuality has not been made clear by feminists. For some reason, truck drivers appear to equate feminist ideas of equality with sameness to men and this perception is particularly troublesome since distinctions between women and men are of paramount importance for women truck drivers. At the same time, they want to be treated equally as truck drivers, so the dictum seems to be ‘equal but different’. Many of the women
say they like being treated differently from the men and some welcome the special acknowledgements and compliments that go with being a woman in a nontraditional job. One woman said

I love the attention ... from the men ... hey, I'm honest! ... I can't help it if they're gonna pay me this much money an hour to have all this attention given to me ... that's not my problem ...

An openness regarding their own sexuality and an ability to handle and cope with sexual innuendo are not unusual, and in some cases, these truckers join in on the game playing and dish it right back at the men, especially their co-workers who drive out of the same terminal.

A similar ease and candidness in discussions on sexuality does not appear vividly as part of the feminist consciousness. For women truck drivers, sexual politics occur every working day at the individual level and remain on the personal plane. For feminists, 'the personal is political' and is extended to the collective level.

In summary, political and class differences exist between feminist consciousness and customized gender consciousness in women truck drivers. However, the barriers between these two groups of women are not insurmountable. Although both groups are challenging the patriarchal gendered division of labour, the means of achieving their goal are not identical. In any case, the goal in both cases is the same, that is, achieving equality in the workplace. This brief outline incorporates only a few of the contradictions and similarities that exist between feminist consciousness and customized consciousness in women truck drivers. A more extensive inquiry into divisions between feminists and other women would be an extremely valuable part of future research.

In addition, future research might include a comparative analysis of male truck drivers with women truckers to determine similarities and differences based on the structural constraints of both class and gender relations. One of the basic weaknesses in this research is the lack of a male comparative and data from which to determine the extent to which male truckers also have a customized gender consciousness. The strength of this thesis lies in the
theory of customized gender consciousness which can be applied to the majority of women and men in society. Customized gender consciousness explains the gaps or grey areas between feminism and patriarchy, and gives people a sense of control over their lives, in that they have the choice to select beliefs and ideas from more than one competing ideology.

However, if both women and men hold a mixture of beliefs and attitudes, a collective gender consciousness may be inhibited and a lack of political action may result, causing a slow down in the process of social change and the possibility of equalizing gender relations over the short term. Customized consciousness, therefore, may be the key to explaining the slow process of social change, not only in gender relations, but also in other areas of social life, including class and race relations. For the continual negotiation back and forth between ideological structures and the material reality of people’s lives brings with it a synthesis of values and beliefs, and new forms of consciousness, that mutes the radical edge of counter-ideologies.
Appendix A

Trucker Terminology

Back haul: return load*

Bed bug haulers: moving vans*

Bills of Lading: a form made out in triplicate that is legally binding when signed by the driver and the shipper*

Blind side: the passenger side of the truck

Blind spot: a spot where it is impossible for the truck driver to see - eg. the area between the mirrors on the tractor and the front bumper

Bob tailing: driving a tractor without a trailer - the most dangerous way to drive*

Broker: a self-employed trucker who owns her own tractor and works under contract hauling trailers for larger companies - also called an independent

Buffalos: male prostitutes, usually homosexual

Buddies: wooden poles with steel on the end - used for hitting the tires to check the air pressure - also used for protection

Bull hauler: a trucker who hauls cattle or livestock

Bunk: sleeping compartment*

Cheat Bar: a steel bar used as a lever to tighten chains and straps

Chicken coops: weigh stations*

Circle check: trucker must walk completely around the truck and trailer checking the engine, brakes, wheels, mirrors, hoses, lights, trailer frames, couplings, straps, and chains - should be done every time a trailer is hooked up

* Information obtained from Merv Orr's Truck Driving Training School Student Manual
Commercial Coin-Operated Beaver: female prostitutes who work at rest areas off major highways or at truck stops - most often called "lot lizards"

Company driver: a trucker who works for wages and drives a company vehicle

Cowboys: Truckers who drive irresponsibly - i.e. speed, tail gate, etc.

Cube van: a smaller truck, usually weighs around two-ton, and the cab is attached directly to a box-shaped van

Dead heading: hauling an empty trailer

Dollies: legs on the trailer that wind up and down

Drop deck trailers: open trailers that are higher at the front but drop down to about forty inches off the ground at the back - often used to haul large pieces of machinery

Fish eyes: the small, round mirrors at the sides of the tractor

Fifth Wheel: a coupling on the tractor that connects with the kingpin on the trailer

Finger Printing: loading and unloading cargo by hand - also called "hand bombing"

Flatbed: a trailer that consists of a large open platform on which lumber, steel, heavy machinery, etc. can be placed

Four wheelers: cars, vans, pick-up trucks

Grandfather clause: the employer verifies that a driver with a Class A license has driven a certain amount of kilometres and the trucker automatically receives her Z permit for air brakes - however, the next time the driver goes in to renew her Class A license, she must also write the air brakes test to receive her Z permit

Granny gear: lowest gear

Hand bombing: loading and unloading cargo by hand - also called "finger printing"

Hot Dogs: Truckers who disregard regulations, cheat on log books and run for hours at a time, non-stop

Hot loads: loads that have to be at their destination in a hurry

Independent: a self-employed trucker who owns her own tractor and works under contract with larger companies - also called a broker

* Information obtained from Merv Orr’s Truck Driving Training School Student Manual
Kingpin: the large pin that hangs down at the front of the trailer and attaches to the fifth wheel on the tractor*

Load brokers: people who arrange loads for transportation companies and take a percentage of the payment for transporting those loads

Log books: record of driving and resting schedule, showing mileage, running time and fuel consumption

Long hauls: several days, weeks or months at a time on the road

Lot Lizards: female prostitutes who work at rest areas off major highways and at truck stops - sometimes called "commercial coin-operated beaver"

Lumpers: unemployed people who hang around receiving docks and load or unload a truck for a trucker - they are paid between twenty and fifty dollars and the money is paid under the table so that it does not have to be reported on income tax forms

Pickle parks: rest areas off major highways

Pin-to-pin: haul a trailer, drop it, and hook up another trailer

Portable parking lots: trucks that haul trailers carrying cars and small vehicles

Portable pipelines: trucks that are hauling flatbed trailers loaded with plastic or cement pipes

Pro-bill: a numbered bill listing the commodities carried and their destination, plus a receipt outlining any damages, shortages or extra weight*

Reefers: refrigerated trailers*

Riding Suicide: sitting in the passenger seat of a truck which quite often does not have air ride suspension

Shaggin’ the dog: avoiding work - e.g. using your sexuality to get others to do your work for you, such as loading and unloading your truck - also called "screwin’ the dog"

Screwin’ the dog: avoiding work - eg. sitting in a coffee shop until it’s time to punch out - also called "shaggin’ the dog"

Short runs: two days or less on the road at a time

Shunting: moving trailers back and forth in the yard or from the warehouse to the yard

* Information obtained from Merv Orr’s Truck Driving Training School Student Manual
Straight Truck: a truck with a cab and box that cannot be disconnected

Tach cards: small round paper disks that fit into a tachograph machine inside the truck

Tachograph: a machine inside the truck that records on tach cards the mileage, speed of truck, engine speed and time of day*

Tank Trucks: trucks that have round, cylindrical-shaped trailers that usually carry commodities such as propane, milk, cement, lime, and so forth

Tractor: motorized portion of the tractor trailer unit

Tractor trailer: a large truck which has a trailer that can be attached or detached from a tractor by means of a coupling mechanism known as a fifth wheel

Trains: double trailers or more than one trailer*

Vans: large, rectangular, box-type trailers that usually carry freight

* Information obtained from Merv Orr's Truck Driving Training School Student Manual
Appendix B

Interview Schedule for Women Truck Drivers

Work Related Questions

1. How old were you when you went into trucking? Did you begin as a driver or did you work in other areas of the trucking industry such as the yard, doing shunting or odd jobs in the shop, etc.?

2. Do you drive alone or with a partner?

3. How long have you been driving a truck?

4. Are you full-time or part-time?

5. What is your work schedule?
   - hours/day?
   - days/week?
   - days off?

6. How does your work schedule affect your home and social life?

7. Is there a limit to the number of hours you can drive at one stretch? Are you allowed lunch or rest breaks? How long are these breaks?

8. What were your reasons for becoming a truck driver?

9. What type of training did you have before becoming a trucker?

10. What type of training was required at that time to drive a truck?

11. Did you have any trouble getting into a truck driver training programme or finding someone to train you?

12. Did you have any difficulty getting your license?

13. How do you feel about being one out of only a few women doing this job?

14. What do you like about the job?

15. What don’t you like about the job?
16. How do you pass the time on the road?
   - radio?
   - C.B.?
   - taking along a friend
   - picking up hitch-hikers
   - other?

17. Are you required to do heavy lifting to help load and unload the truck? Are there mechanical lifts available or do you have help with this work at receiving docks?

18. Do you do long distance hauls or short runs?

19. Are you an independent broker or a company driver?

20. If you are an independent, do you work out of one company or several?

21. Does your company, or do you, arrange the loads? How is this done?

22. How are you paid?
   - so much per mile?
   - so much per hour?
   - a percentage of the load?
   - so much to unload?
   - so much for border crossings?

23. Are you paid the same rate as the men?

24. How much are you paid per mile/hour/load, etc.?

25. How do you negotiate your pay schedule and conditions of work?

26. Is there a time-limit on your run? Are you affected by the "just in time" procedures of some companies?

27. Do you use tach cards? What is the purpose of these cards? Are these cards ever used to discipline workers? Have these cards ever helped drivers, and how?

28. Are you required to haul double trailers or just single trailers? Who makes this choice?

29. Are you the one responsible for balancing the load?

30. Are you required to carry more than your legal weight in cargo? If so, what happens if you are caught at the weigh scales? Do you feel that, as a woman, you get pulled over at the weigh scales more often than a man would?

31. What do you feel is the most dangerous aspect of the job?
   - jack-knifing?
   - falling asleep at the wheel?
   - unstable loads?
   - being attacked by someone, especially at night?
   - hauling hazardous materials?
32. Have you ever been injured on the job?
33. What type of cargo do you carry?
34. Are you licensed to carry hazardous materials? If so, what are the regulations regarding these materials?
35. If your truck overturns and spills occur, who is responsible for the clean-up? Who pays the penalties?
36. Are you able to take along a rider with you, or is that covered in your insurance or under your contract?
37. Who is responsible for maintenance of your vehicle? How much mechanical training are you required to have? What do you do when your truck breaks down at the side of the road?
38. Do you talk on the CB very much? Does the CB provide a network with other truckers and how effective is it?
39. How has deregulation affected you as a trucker? Were you involved in the blockades at the borders last spring?
40. When you stop for breaks at truck stops, do you sit and talk to other truck drivers? Are there regulars with whom you meet? Do you spend time with both male and female truckers?
41. What is the reaction of male truck drivers to you as a woman and a trucker? Do they accept you as a truck driver or do they treat you differently because you are female?
42. Do male truck drivers tease, ridicule, make jokes or harass you?
43. Are there male truckers who express support for what you are doing?
44. What is the reaction of males who have to load and unload your truck?
45. How do people who see you driving truck respond to you? How do people react when you tell them you are a truck driver?
46. What do you wear when you drive truck?
47. Does working with mainly males make you feel more aware of being a woman?
48. Have you had to toughen up physically and/or psychologically to do this job?
49. Are there any reasons why a woman couldn’t do this job?
50. Would you encourage other women to become truck drivers?
51. What was your motivation for becoming a truck driver?
52. Would you call yourself a feminist?
Personal and Family Related Questions

1. Are you single, married, separated, divorced, or cohabitating?

2. Do you have children? What are their ages? What are your arrangements for child care?

3. What effect has your job as a truck driver had on your personal or family life?

4. How does your family feel about your choice of occupation?
   - husband?
   - children?
   - parents?
   - siblings?

5. How do you arrange time for work both outside the home and within the home?

6. Does your husband take responsibility for part of the housework and child care? Does he do cooking, cleaning, vacuuming, laundry, shopping, etc.?

7. Do you feel that you have more leisure time than your husband or does he have more time for leisure activities?

8. What do you do in your spare time?

9. Do you have much time for being with friends outside the workplace?

10. How do your friends react to your job as a truck driver?

11. Do you go out socially with other truck drivers?

Union Related Questions

1. Do you belong to a union?

2. Which union do you belong to?

3. Are you personally involved in the union as part of the executive or on a committee?

4. Have you ever taken a leadership role in the union, or do you know of any women who have taken positions of responsibility in your union?

5. Have you been encouraged to participate in the union, by either men or women?

6. Does the union address your needs?
   - as a trucker?
   - as a woman?
7. Does your union have a women's committee?

8. Does this committee or your union address women's issues such as day care, maternity leave, pay equity, sexual harassment? Are these issues included in your contract, by-laws or constitution?

9. Do you have any input into your contract or are the issues decided by someone else?

10. What are the major issues that your union is addressing at the present time?

11. What type of representation do you have at union meetings? Are all members invited to attend or do representatives attend?

12. Since many separate trucking firms have drivers who are affiliated under one union, how does the union resolve the problems that are peculiar to your company?

13. If you have a grievance, what is the procedure for addressing the problem? Are women's issues or problems being adequately addressed by the men or women in charge?

14. Are you ever required to make deliveries to a company that is on strike? If so, what is the procedure?

15. Does your union ever speak out about public issues such as free trade, abortion, etc.?

16. Does your union ever endorse or become politically active in support of a particular political party?
Appendix C

Interview Schedule for Hiring Personnel

at Trucking Companies

1. A recent study done by the Canadian Trucking Association has suggested that there is currently a shortage of qualified truck drivers. Has your company experienced this problem?

2. Is there a minimum age requirement for truck drivers in your company? eg. 19, 21, 25?

3. What is the beginning rate of pay for truck drivers in your company?

4. Do part-time truck drivers receive the same rate of pay as full-time truck drivers?

5. Do you have any women working as truck drivers for your company?
   Yes ________  No ________

If the answer to Question 5 is "YES":

   a. How many women are employed in your company as compared to the number of men?
   b. Are the women employed as full-time or part-time drivers?
   c. Has the work of the women truck drivers been satisfactory?
   d. Do the women do the same jobs as the men?
   e. Are they paid the same rate as the men?
   f. Is the turnover rate greater, less, or about the same for women as compared to men?
   g. Has hiring women meant extra costs in terms of installing separate washroom and change room facilities?
If the answer to Question 5 is "NO":

a. Have you ever had a woman truck driver employed with your company?

b. Have you had any women come in to apply as truck drivers in the past few years? If yes -- what was the reason for not hiring them?
   
   Were they not qualified?
   Was it because of lack of experience?
   Was it because of their age?
   Was there another reason?

   c. Would hiring women mean additional operating costs for your company, in terms of installing separate washroom and change room facilities?

6. Have you actively encouraged women to apply as drivers with your company, either through advertising or word-of-mouth?

7. Can a woman do the job as easily as a man?

8. Have there been any technological changes in recent years that have made the job easier? For example, equipment for lifting and loading goods onto trucks?

9. In your opinion, is there any reason why a woman would not be able to do the job?

For those companies who do have women truck drivers:

10. Do you think that the women truck drivers who work for your company would be willing to speak to me about their job? Is it possible for you to give me the names and phone numbers of your female truck drivers? If not, could you give them my phone number and have them call me collect?

Thank you for taking the time to respond to my questions.
# DRIVER'S DAILY LOG
One Calendar Day—24 Hours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STARTING ODOMETER</th>
<th>MILES (Km) TODAY</th>
<th>MILES (Km) DRIVEN TODAY</th>
<th>DRIVER'S NAME (PRINT)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TRUCK/TRACTOR LIC. PLATE</td>
<td>UNIT #</td>
<td>TRAILER(S) LIC. PLATE</td>
<td>UNIT #</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CARRIER(S)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CO-DRIVER'S NAME (PRINT)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DUTY STATUS</th>
<th>MAIN/PRINCIPAL OFFICE ADDRESS</th>
<th>GRID</th>
<th>HOME TERMINAL ADDRESS</th>
<th>Total Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Off-duty time other than time at a Shippers' berth</td>
<td>Use Local Time Standard at Home Terminal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Off-duty time at a Shippers' berth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Driving time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. On-duty time other than driving time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REMARKS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Check the time and enter name of place you reported to, where relieved from work and where each change of duty occurred. Explain excess hours.

Record shipping document, manifest number or name of shipper and commodity.

Starting point: ____________________________  Destination: ____________________________  Commodity: ____________________________

Shipping Doc. No.: ____________________________

Original (white): Submit to Carrier  Duplicate (yellow): Driver Retain

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### DRIVER'S VEHICLE INSPECTION REPORT

#### CARRIER'S NAME:

#### CARRIER'S ADDRESS:

#### TRACTOR/TRUCK:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Make</th>
<th>Plate or Unit No.</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>M</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Air Brake Adjustment and Connections
- Air Compressor
- Air Lines
- Battery
- Body
- Brake Accessories
- Brake Air Pressure or Vacuum Gauge
- Brake Booster
- Brake Failure Warning Light
- Warning Signal, Low Pressure or Low Vacuum
- Brake Pedal
- Hydraulic Brake Fluid
- Parking Brake
- Carburetor
- Clutch
- Coupling Devices
- Defroster and Heaters
- Drive Line

- Emergency Equipment
- Fire Extinguisher
- Reflective Triangles
- Flags-Flares-Fuses
- Spare Bulbs and Fuses
- Spare Seal Beams
- Engine
- Exhaust System
- Fifth Wheel
- Front Axle
- Fuel System
- Generator
- Horn
- All Lights and Reflectors
- Head-Stop
- Tail-Dash
- Turn Indicators
- Clearance

- Load Covering
- Load Security
- Mirrors
- Oil Pressure
- Radiator
- Rear End
- Driver's Seatbelt and Seat Security
- Steering
- Steering Wheel
- Suspension, Springs, Air Bag and Controlling Attachments
- Tachograph
- Tires
- Tire Chains
- Towing and Coupling Devices
- Transmission
- Wheels, Rims, and Fasteners
- Windshield and Windows
- Windshield Washer and Wipers
- Fuel System
- Landing Gear
- All Lights and Reflectors
- Load Covering
- Load Security
- Roof
- Suspension, Springs, Air Bags and Controlling Attachments
- Towing and Coupling Devices
- Tires
- Wheels, Rims and Fasteners
- Other

#### TRAILER(S):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plate or Unit Number</th>
<th>#1</th>
<th>#2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- Air Brake Adjustment and Connections
- Parking Brake
- Coupling Chains
- Doors

#### Remarks

- ODOMETER END OF DAY
- ODOMETER START OF DAY
- TOTAL MILES DRIVEN TODAY

- □ Condition of the above vehicle is satisfactory
  - □ Above defects corrected
    - □ Above defects need not be corrected for sale operation of vehicle

- Inspector's name (print)
- Mechanic's signature
- Driver's signature

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Hebron, WI 54947-0168 USA
Appendix F

"No Lot Lizards" Stickers

NO LOT LIZARDS
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Berheide, Catherine White

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