INTERSPECIES RELATIONS IN EQUESTRIAN SPORT

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Abstract:

This thesis is a sandwich thesis that explores youth participation in equestrian sport. Each of the three papers that comprise the substantive portion of this thesis are stand-alone papers. Each paper employs a mixed methodology which includes document analysis, media analysis, and semi-structured interviews. The goal of the thesis is to analyse and describe: (1) what, if anything, young female equestrians gain from participating in equestrian stables, (2) the form and function of "trust" in competitive youth equestrian sport, and, (3) the characteristics of the equine industry in Canada and how it has evolved since the introduction of the Canadian Pony Club in 1934. These three aspects of equestrian sport in Canada are examined using data from equine industry documents such as reports and program material, equine industry media including websites, online magazines, and blogs, and semi-structured interviews with current and former female equestrians who participated in equestrian sport during their youth. This thesis is a retrospective study. Interviewees were members of the Canadian Pony Club at some point during their youth. The thesis employs a range of sociological theories and perspectives, drawing on the work of Pierre Bourdieu, George Herbert Mead, Niklas Luhmann, and Donna Haraway. Theoretically and substantially, it provides a rigorous understanding of the equine industry in Canada, the human-horse relationship, and female youth participation in equestrian sport. It makes a contribution to sociology by providing an analysis of modernity and the current conditions of the risk society, arguing that the horse (and other animals) now occupy a unique position in society and may act as a means of dealing with the individuality and complexity of a risk society.

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Further appreciation and thanks are extended to my family and friends, especially my husband, Darcy Toombs, and my parents Gordon and Patience Gilbert, who have encouraged and supported me unconditionally through this long process. This dissertation would not have been possible without the love and encouragement from these particular individuals, and the family and friends that motivate me everyday.

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Abbreviations:

i. CADORA – Canadian Dressage Owners and Riders Association

ii. CAS – Critical Animal Studies

iii. CPC – Canadian Pony Club

iv. EC – Equine Canada

v. HAR – Human-Animal Relations

vi. HAS – Human-Animal Studies

vii. OEF – Ontario Equestrian Federation

viii. OHTA – Ontario Horse Trials Association

ix. PAN AM - Pan-American Games

x. THJA - Trillium Hunter Jumper Association

Declaration of Academic Achievement:

I, Michelle Gilbert, am responsible for this program of research and thesis in its entirety. I designed the interview guide, recruited interviewees, and conducted interviews. I collected data from media and document sources and analyzed all data by drawing out themes as they presented. I wrote all portions of this thesis. However, I owe credit to the anonymous reviewers of paper one, Young Equestrians: The Horse Stable as a Cultural Space, and paper two, Trust in Equestrian Sport, who offered valuable feedback on earlier versions of the papers before each was published, respectively, in *Sport, Animals, and Society*, and the *Sociology of Sport Journal*. My supervisor Dr. James Gillett and my committee members Drs. Phil White and Dorothy Pawluch also offered appreciated guidance on earlier versions of this thesis.

This thesis is a sandwich thesis. Each of the three papers that make up the substantive portion of the thesis are stand-alone papers. Papers one and two have already been published while the third paper is currently under revision as a chapter in a forthcoming edited anthology. Equine studies and human-animal studies are growing fields and, with this thesis, I contribute an examination of how horses figure in the lives of young female equestrians in Ontario, Canada. In the three papers that make up this thesis, I explore the relationship between human and horse in the context of sport, recreation, and leisure. I draw on the theoretical work of Pierre Bourdieu, George Herbert Mead, Niklas Luhmann, and Donna Harraway, and situate my work within a literature informed by human-animal studies/equine studies and sport sociology. Using a mixed methods approach, including semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and media analysis, I demonstrate that social spaces such as the horse stable are complex. Gender is not binary. Trust is multidimensional and develops a through a combination of social processes. Finally, changes in society, such as a shift towards a neo-liberal economic logic, can change our consumption patterns and subsequently influence the opportunities that individuals will have in future.

PONY CLUB

The Pony Club was established in 1929 in Great Britain. During the first six years of its introduction, it experienced rapid growth to over 10,000 members (Canadian Pony Club, 2013). In 1934, a group of individuals with the Eglinton Hunt Club in Toronto, Ontario were inspired by their military associates in Britain and applied for permission to start a branch of the Pony Club in Canada (Canadian Pony Club, 2013). With permission

granted, the first Pony Club in Canada was formed, taking the name the "Eglinton Pony Club." Like its British counterpart, the Canadian Pony Club saw vast expansion across the country in the first few years. Although this expansion slowed and membership is now declining in Canada, there are still about 150 branches in Canada. In paper one of this thesis, I outline that Equine Canada estimated that there were approximately 5,800 Canadian Pony Club members in 2010. By contrast, the Canadian Pony Club website estimates that there are approximately 3,500 members (Canadian Pony Club, 2013). The 2012 Canadian Pony Club annual report, meanwhile, suggests that it is more likely that there are about 2,300 Pony Club members currently active across Canada (CPC Annual Report, 2012). Regardless of how many youth are currently members of the Canadian Pony Club, the features of Pony Club have remained relatively consistent over time.

On the whole, members are between the ages of six and twenty-one. There are, however, some cases where an exception can be granted allowing for membership up to twenty-four years old. The Canadian Pony Club's moto is "Loyalty, Character, Sportmanship,*"* and the organization is committed to providing "the opportunity for every child in Canada to have a positive experience with horses" (Canadian Pony Club, 2013). The organization seeks to encourage enjoyment and/or competitive successes with horses, opportunities for education, responsibility, good citizenship, and sportsmanship (Canadian Pony Club, 2013). When first formed in Canada, any child was welcome to participate at the cost of $0.75 per year (Canadian Pony Club, 2013). Today, the fees differ depending on the region and branch to which a person belongs, but it costs approximately $150.00 per year. In Canada, the Pony Club is widely seen as one of the

more affordable ways to participate in equestrian sport. As Buckley, Dunn and More (2004) explain, the Pony Club "was established to teach young people the many aspects of horsemanship" (p.121).

Pony Club is made possible through the work of approximately 1,000 volunteers (Canadian Pony Club, 2013). As Byers (2013) explains, there is pressure on voluntary sports clubs to improve their operations through enhanced service delivery which is consistent with the private sector. Voluntary based organizations and clubs have limited finances, expertise, and facilities (Collins & Kay, 2003). They are limited in their capacity to facilitate sport. Within a particular sport, such as the Pony Club, club operations and norms can vary widely (Byers, 2013). Volunteers are agents that operate within the historical context of the organization, its norms, and values (Byers, 2013). The volunteers and participants that take part in the Pony Club shape the social structure of the organization (Byers, 2013).

Participants in this study are all current or former Pony Club members. This parameter was chosen because these equestrians represent a wide range of disciplinary interests, a wide range of socio-economic classes, and a group of equestrians that are encouraged to be active in the stable.

PROGAM OF RESEARCH

I come to this program of research through my experiences studying equestrian sport and human-horse relations in other contexts. In this section, I highlight the scholarly pursuits that have led me to this program of research because it provides a framework for the papers in this thesis.

I began studying equestrian sport in 2007 while completing my master's degree in sociology at McMaster University. At the time, I was working on a study that examined a new type of horse breed in Canada, the "sport pony." I interviewed Ontario horse breeders and people who worked with the breed in some capacity. I found that changes were occurring in the Canadian equine industry and horse breeders were becoming less interested in breeding for bloodlines and more concerned with breeding for athletic ability and aesthetics. The sport pony was a reflection of this change because it represented a category of pony that could include all ponies; any pony could be classified as a sport pony, regardless of its bloodlines. The pony would be inspected and given a score based on three characteristics: their aesthetic appearance, their temperament, and their athletic ability. The value of a horse, or in this case pony, was moving away from an ascribed status towards an achieved status. Together with my supervisor, Dr. James Gillett, we eventually published this program of research in the *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* in an article titled *Equine Athletes and Interspecies Sport.*

After taking a year off following the competition of my master's degree, I returned to McMaster to complete my doctorate in sociology. At this point, I decided to continue with my research on equestrian sport and began to immerse myself in the fields of equine studies and sport sociology. In 2011, my supervisor and I organized the first session on equestrian sport at the North American Society for the Sociology of Sport (NASSS) conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota. With representation from England, Sweden, Brazil, Canada, and the United States, this became the first meeting of scholars interested in equestrian sport at a sport sociology conference. From this session and the

informal networking that occurred at the conference, I became submersed in the field of equine studies. I joined the Equine Research Network (ERN) and was connected to a diverse group of scholars from all over the world. I continued to chair and participate in sessions on animals in sport over the next few years at NASSS and Sport and Society conferences.

I worked on programs of research that were in the equine studies field but not directly related to my dissertation. I was interested in equestrian polo so I developed a program of research on the topic and interviewed male and female polo players from Ontario, Canada. In 2013, Dr. James Gillett and I published this research in the book chapter *Women in Equestrian Polo: Cultural Capital and Sport Trajectories,* a chapter included in the book *Gender in Equestrian Sport: Riding around the World.* This book was edited by one of the scholars that attended our session in 2011 at the North American Sociology of Sport conference. In early 2014, Dr. Gillett and I also published the article *Into the Mountains and Across the Nation: Emergent Forms of Companion Species Adventure Leisure in Canada.* Using the narratives of two female adventurers, one at the turn of the twentieth century and the other from a post-World War Two era, we examined how the human-horse relationship was shaped through common experience and adventure. Applying Deleuze and Guattari's concept of lines of flight, we explored how travel on horseback facilitated a process by which the two young women in different moments in time became deterritorialized and reterritorialized.

In late 2013, Dr. Gillett and I published the edited anthology *Sport, Animals, and Society*. This anthology is a collection of articles by scholars from France, Sweden, the

United States, Australia, Canada, and England. The book presents sixteen chapters over five sections with many chapters that examine human-horse relations. It explores dichotomies, relations, ethics, violence, identities, and future directions in the human-animal studies field. The first paper in this thesis, *Young Equestrians: The Horse Stable as a Cultural Space,* is a chapter in this anthology. Through the process of soliciting papers, reviewing abstracts, communicating with authors, reviewing chapters, preparing the introduction, and editing the manuscript, I built networks with scholars in the fields of human-animal studies and equine studies.

Over the last seven years I have developed programs of research in equine studies, human-animal studies, and sport sociology, including the one that is presented in this thesis. I have peer reviewed, as an expert in the equine studies field, for some of the top sport sociology journals. I bring to sport sociology and equine studies personal experience in the Canadian equine industry and expert knowledge of the social science literature that examines equestrian sport. Methodologically, I am a qualitative researcher; I am interested in themes, discourse, narratives, and, as I outline in this thesis, I am more interested in understanding what people believe to be true and why, rather than trying to prove an ultimate truth. I look for themes in my interviews and in the magazines, webpages, newspapers, and documents that I analyze. I argue that most of what we know is socially constructed. I use theory generously but I do not subscribe to any one particular school of thought.

My experience as a researcher and equestrian has led me to identify "horse people" as passionate individuals. They show this passion through the way they talk about

horses, but also through the time and money they give to horses and equestrian sport. Some work long hours on horse farms for minimal pay just for the opportunity to be around horses. Others pay more in a month to keep their horse then some people spend on rent or a mortgage. They come from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds, but give to the sport and/or horses the resources they have available to them. At the amateur level they are primarily female, and the majority of those currently involved in the Canadian equine industry have been involved for at least ten years (Equine Canada, 2010). They are immersed in a culture and social world which, when compared to other sports, is incredibly unique. When youth participate in horseback riding they become part of this culture, or as I will demonstrate in paper one, a natureculture, where they are encouraged to learn, explore, and engage in their surroundings. Sometimes this is messy - literally, these people get dirty - but as the youth equestrian horse blogs demonstrate and the interviewees in this study will testify, many of them fall in love with horses.

Collectively, the papers in this thesis contribute a sociological analysis of youth equestrian sport in Ontario, Canada to three fields of academic study: sociology, sociology of sport, and equine studies. These three fields represent a primary field of study, a secondary field of study, and a third area of scholarship that is currently under development. This study of equestrian sport offers sociology, sociology of sport, and equine studies, the opportunity to understand the complexity of social spaces, human-animal relationships, and evolutions in sport over time.

THESIS OVERVIEW

Although the topic of this thesis is youth equestrian sport, the analysis contributes

to a greater understanding of sociological theory. The first two papers challenge binaries, nature/culture (paper one), structure/agency (paper two), while the third paper calls for a more fluid understanding of capital accumulation because of a movement towards neo-liberal economic logic in Canadian society, sport, and the equine industry. Each paper reflects my attempt to move beyond binaries and to develop a sociological analysis wherein a combination of theories and methods can be used constructively for the purposes of social science research. Throughout this thesis, this notion is demonstrated by using a combination of posthumanist theory and Bourdieu's theories of capital (paper one), interpretive theory and social systems theory, a form of structural theory (paper two). Additionally, theories of capital are utilized to understand the consequences of a shift towards a neo-liberal economic logic (paper three).

In addition to the contributions each paper makes to sociology, this thesis also aids in developing equine studies as an interdisciplinary academic field. It draws on the fact that, in various ways, humans have begun to engage animals in society differently than they did as recently as ten years ago. Economically, an industry of consumption has built up around companion animals. Animals now have groomers and daycare services; they wear clothing and attend events. In many cases, horses are considered among these companion animals. Although they do not live in the house with their owners (as is common for companion animals), they are often treated like children. Special "clothing" is purchased for them, they are taken to events, and horse boarding is a fulltime daycare service. As commodification in the traditional dog and cat companion animal industries has increased, the equine industry has followed closely. These recent social

transformations reflect the centrality of animals in both society and in our understanding of society.

Finally, this thesis is situated within the context of sport sociology literature. Historically, animals have played a significant role in sport. For instance, dogs, horses and rabbits are all used in various ways for racing, hunting, and jumping. Throughout history, animals have been used to make sports products such as footballs, basketballs, and soccer balls. Animals are often the inspiration for team names and mascots in various sports. Despite the long history and prominent place of animals in sport, the study of animals in sport is still relatively underdeveloped. In recent years, studies of equestrian sport have evolved considerably, contributing to the growth of equine studies and animal studies fields. This thesis is an important contribution to sport sociology and the development of a literature on animals in sport.

This thesis is interested in what young equestrians gain from participation in horseback riding and the horse stable. What makes participation in competitive equestrian sport possible with regards to the actors and social system within which they exist, and how does the concept of "trust" figure in this relationship? Why, in the last twenty-five years, has there has been a shift away from the volunteer based discipline, the Pony Club, towards for-profit equestrian competitions? These questions contribute to our sociological understanding of social spaces, the concept of trust, and the impact of a neo-liberal economic logic on segments of Canadian society, in this case equestrian sport.

Collectively the papers in this thesis are rich in sociological analysis and make descriptive, theoretical, and methodological contributions to the fields of sport sociology

and equine studies. The next section offers a brief overview of human-animal studies as a field within which both this thesis and sociological equine studies are situated.

HUMAN-ANIMAL STUDIES

Over twenty years have passed since the first issue of *Society & Animals* was published. In 2002, the journal presented a tenth anniversary edition that evaluated the first decade of scholarship and literature in the academic field known as human-animal studies (HAS). Eight years later, Shapiro and DeMello (2010) revisited the growth of the field, explaining that drastic expansion had called for reassessment. They outlined the dramatic increase in college (and in the Canadian context, university) programs in human-animal studies or related fields in the United States, Great Britain, Canada, the Netherlands, Germany, and Israel. They identified over thirty human-animal studies organizations in Canada, the United States, Sweden, Switzerland, Australia, New Zealand, France, Israel, and Germany. In their view, the strength of the human-animal studies field is demonstrated by its presence as university and college courses, in the associations, organizations, conferences, list-serves that support its interests, and in the numerous books and journals that continue to advance human-animal studies research (Shapiro & DeMello, 2010).

Society & Animals was created as a peer reviewed journal that explores human and animal relations from social science and humanities perspectives (Animals and Society, 2013). About five years prior, in 1987, the publication *Anthrozoos,* began as a quarterly, peer-reviewed journal that attends to interactions and relationships between human and non-human animals, although not exclusively from social science and

humanities perspectives (Anthrozoos, 2013). These journals include articles on a range of human-animal related topics, ranging from animal welfare to human-animal co-presence, and have been important contributors to the growth of the field. Over the last fifteen years, the study of human-animal relations has evolved significantly (Gilbert and Gillett, 2013), however, as Shapiro (2002) explains, there is a "diffused distribution of university sites and advisors. In other words, HAS is not finding institutional-based home-sites that provide robust and ongoing research programs" (p. 333-334). Despite these concerns, growth is encouraging, and as more universities in Canada move towards interdisciplinary research (Queen's University, 2012) human-animal studies programs may have an opportunity to build their presence on university campuses. For example, the new social psychology program at McMaster University has begun to offer selected courses that address human-animal relations.

In this introduction, I provide an overview of the literature that has contributed to this field and demonstrate the contribution that this thesis makes to the study of human-horse relations and equestrian sport. The papers included in this thesis were limited (because of publishing guidelines) as to how much detail they could provide on the field of equine studies and sport sociology - fields in which they are situated and to which they contribute. In this next section, I begin with an overview of early literature that contributed to the growth of the human-animal studies field. I then outline areas within the field of human-horse relations that are important to the theoretical and substantive insights presented in this thesis, including discipline specific socio-cultural studies, research on human-horse relations, critical animal studies, and gender in equestrian sport,

recreation, and leisure. In this literature review, the sociological nature of the research that has been conducted in this field is evident. My objective is to highlight this literature as it contributes to my analysis of equestrian sport, gender, youth, human-horse relations, trust, and changes in sport over time. Following the literature review, I highlight the theoretical strengths and weaknesses of the theories that I use in this thesis as they are applied in studies of interspecies relations. Finally, I introduce the methods used in this study and briefly outline the methodological challenges of studying human-animal relations.

LITERATURE

The field of human-horse studies is a growing and now a surprisingly large area of research that includes studies of human-horse interaction, equestrian sport, recreation, and leisure, violence and ethics, equine assisted therapy, equestrian tourism, and human-horse co-presence. In 2000, Canadian sociologist Audrey Wipper wrote "The Partnership: The Horse-Rider Relationship in Eventing" which was published in the journal of *Symbolic Interaction*. This article was an important piece for the field of human-horse relations and the field of human-animal relations. In addition to her analysis of human-horse relationships and partnerships in the equestrian sport of eventing, Wipper (2000) highlights the lack of attention sociologists had paid to the human-horse partnership. She outlines that the relationship is important to veterinarians, farriers, animal trainers, and massage therapists and chiropractors who treat horses, and offers suggestions as to why sociologists had not attended to the horse-human relationship. Wipper (2000) explains

how the stark distinction between nonhuman and human interaction has led sociologists, particularly symbolic interactionists, to dismiss the possibility that human and horse could engage in meaningful interaction. According to this view, because they lack meaningful interaction, human and horse are unable to engage in role-playing, develop a language system, and acquire self-consciousness. In paper two, I engage this debate in my analysis of interspecies trust as it develops in competitive youth equestrian sport. I highlight Wipper's (2000) assertion that, "by excluding human-animal interaction, the sociological eye has excluded an important aspect of people's lives – their relationships with domestic animals" (p.50), and argue that analyses of human-animal interaction, relations, and co-presence, should not be reserved for domestic animals. In this thesis, however, the interactions between humans and domestic horses are the focus. It is important to consider some of the research that has examined the horse-human relationship in contemporary society.

EARLY CONTRIBUTIONS TO HUMAN-HORSE STUDIES

The first recognized study of human-horse relations is the Athenian soldier Xenophon's *Art of Horseman-ship* which was translated into an English text by Morris Morgan in 1893. This text outlines what to look for with regards to confirmation when buying a horse, how to care for a horse, how to communicate with a horse, how to ride a horse effectively, and what risks to expect when encountering various situations such as war, parades, hills, and ditches. Although this is an interesting historical work, I focus my attention on the first academic studies of human-horse relations.

In one of the first studies of equestrian sport subcultures, Clatworthy (1981) examined saddle-horse culture and found that very few equestrians participate in the sport for money or profit. Rather, equestrians cited the beauty of horses, excitement, sense of reward, and most frequently, the possibility of making friends and meeting new people, as reasons for pursuing the sport (Clatworthy, 1981). Through interviews and survey data she also found that sixty-one percent of equestrians had experienced some form of physical injury from riding (Clatworthy, 1981). Around the same time, Grey (1989) examined combined driving and found that, despite popular perception, only thirty-one percent of combined drivers are classified as upper-class; most are more appropriately classified as middle-class.

In one of the first scholarly evaluations of human-horse relationships, Elizabeth Atwood Lawrence (1982) studied rodeo and explains that participants in rodeo view it as a 'way of life' rather than a job or a means of making money. Helmer (1991) shares this insight in his examination of the culture of harness racing. He explores "how the horse itself constitutes the focus of a cultural system" (Helmer, 1991, p.176). In Lawrence's (1982) study of the relationship rodeo men have with the horses they use, she argues the horse is a counterpart. Where the goal in rodeo is to defeat the bronc or wrestle a steer, the horse is valued and often cherished. Lawrence (1982) explains that, in training the rodeo horse, the man has to use culture (schooling) to overcome nature (the natural instincts of the horse). A calf roping horse must be taught to move backwards, an unnatural instinct. As an illustration of the human-horse connectivity in rodeo, Lawrence (1982) outlines, "the most significant thing about the horse's role in the calf roping

operation is that he performs his most essential function while he is not being directly controlled by man. For he is unmounted during the critical time of the tying of the calf" (p.155). Calf roping is the only rodeo event where the horse works without its rider but, according to participants, the horse is still a counterpart rather than an instrument (Lawrence, 1982). Rodeo horses have different jobs and different qualities; "the horse ridden by the pickup man has to be fearless, willing, and dependable, as it must come in close contact with wildly bucking and kicking broncs" (Lawrence, 1982, p. 156). In each case, both horse and rider are influenced by nature and culture. Lawrence (1982) explains that a cowboy's horse was at times his closest companion, a friend, a partner, and much more than a servant.

In 1985, Lawrence built upon her earlier study with an examination of the horse in rodeo, mounted police units, Crow Indian culture, Western Plains people, and gypsies. She explored the symbolic and practical importance of horses in society. While her other work focuses heavily on rodeo and North American culture, in this work she also explores the role of horses in all five of these different cultural contexts. For instance, in reference to mounted police units, she explains that these horses are important to the preservation of authority and maintenance of order in human society.

In her later work, Lawrence (1994) revisits the tensions that exist in the human-horse relationship and suggests that horses represent the extreme polarities of wild and tame that are embodied, to varying degrees, by each individual horse. Humans must learn balance in order to form a successful relationship with a horse. She equates this to a

nature/culture balance, and posits that humans must balance their control with the wildness of a particular horse.

Where Lawrence takes a particular interest in human-animal relations in rodeo, other scholars (Rosecrance, 1985; Bryson, 1987; Helmer, 1991) were interested in horse racing. Studying the backstretch of thoroughbred racing, Rosecrance (1985) uses a social world's perspective. He outlines that the backstretch of the thoroughbred racetrack is an important occupational space that is largely overlooked by conventional society. Both Rosecrance (1985) and Helmer (1991) examine harness racing and explain the backstretches of their respective racetracks as cultural spaces that insulate their participants from the outside world. Bryson (1987) explored women in horse racing as part of her analysis of masculine hegemony in sport. In her Australian study, she outlines that, although women (at that time) had only recently been allowed to participate in major horse racing events as jockeys, their lighter weights should make them superior jockeys (Bryson, 1987).

These studies make up the limited literature that contributed to the foundation of what can now be identified as human-horse studies. More significant advancements in this field have occurred in the last fifteen years.

HUMAN-HORSE STUDIES TODAY

Until the early twenty-first century there was limited analysis of human-horse relations found in academic journals. As outlined previously, the journal of *Symbolic Interaction* published Wipper's (2000) study of equestrian eventing. In 2013, Adelman and Knijnik published the edited anthology *Gender and Equestrian Sport: Riding around*

the World, the first book to offer a concentrated examination of equestrian sport and human-horse relationships. Also in 2013, Gillett and Gilbert published the edited anthology *Sport, Animals, and Society* which includes many chapters that explore human and horse relations. Scholars have examined equestrian sport industries in Canada (Gilbert, 2013; Coutler, 2013; Gilbert & Gillett, 2012, 2013), France (Roche & Jones, 2008), Sweden (Hedenborg, 2007; Hedenborg & Hedenborg White, 2012), Britain (Butler, 2013; Dashper, 2012), Brazil (Adelman & Becker, 2013), and the United States (Arluke & Bogdan, 2013). There has also been a considerable amount of literature which has examined various socio-cultural aspects of horseback riding, equestrian sport, and horse-human relations.

DISCIPLINE SPECIFIC SOCIO-CULTURAL STUDIES

Following from the early literature on human-horse relations and sport involving horses, a number of studies have advanced our knowledge of horse racing and rodeo. McManus and Montoya (2012) explored Australian jumps racing and argue that in human-animal relations the frequent and close contacts with animals, in their case thoroughbred horses, influences the co-constructing of horses and humans. Rebecca Cassidy (2002), one of the most recognized scholars to evaluate the horse racing industry in the United Kingdom, studies the class system within "racing society". Cassidy (2002) identifies that "racing is a sport and also an industry" (p. 54). She explains that racing attracts both the elite and the lowest classes in society (Cassidy, 2007). Races promote emotional responses through disappointment, triumph, tragedy, disaster, and death (Cassidy, 2007).

At the center of it all is the human-animal relationship between a horse and its caretaker (Cassidy, 2007). Racing gives the appearance of naturalness as horses battle down the track in a quest for victory. As Cassidy (2007) argues, however, it is actually very unnatural; the competition is between people rather than horses. Even the boundaries of the racecourse reinforce an unnatural separation of spaces that promotes specific ways of being. Inside the racecourse a trainer dresses as though they and the horses they train are on display. By contrast, their appearance is often tattered and unprofessional when at home in the barn. Cassidy (2002) explains that the division between the racing world and the outside world is reinforced by the structural elements that make up the race track, the perimeter wall where spectators must pay to gain entry, and the exclusive spaces like the jockeys weigh room or the parade circle. In short, there is a distinct insider versus outsider experience that has built over time in the racing industry. Butler (2013) explores how women became part of the racing industry in the late 1960s and early 1970s. She explains that studies of horse racing are generally social historical accounts or encyclopedic in nature (Vamplew & Kay, 2006) and there is very little literature on the experiences of stable lads (Butler, 2013).

In Argentina, the rise of organized equestrian sport has resulted in the demise of the traditional pastimes and contests of the guacho (Slatta, 1986). As Slatta (1986) explains, gauchos are a social group with a unique equestrian subculture. Historically, they could be found in the plains or pampas hunting wild cattle or as migratory ranch hands (Slatta, 1986). In a move towards the "age of spectators" and away from "the age of folk games" gauchos have lost their place in Argentinian society (Slatta, 1986, p.109).

In Brazil, class and race structure participation in equestrian sports (Knijink, 2013). Sports such as dressage and show jumping are known to be elite pastimes, whereas popular rodeo sports are practiced by participants who are able to keep their horses in their own backyards; these individuals are generally of middle and working class backgrounds (Adelman & Becker, 2013; Knijink, 2013).

Forsyth and Thompson (2007) study gender in rodeo and explain that, although women are often invisible at rodeo events, they play an important role in rodeo culture. Women have had a long, but hidden, history at rodeo events (Jordan, 1992). Women are presented as the western heroine, and although they are perceived as athletic, they are rarely seen as more than a performing cowgirl (Bakken & Farrington, 2003; LeCompte, 1993; Roach, 1990). Arluke and Bogdan (2013) explain that, prior to the 1930s, women were regular participants in various rodeo events. Most cowboys were generally accepting of integrated and gender-segregated competitions and treated women as legitimate competitors (Arluke & Bogdan, 2013). Although there was debate about the safety of female rodeo competitors prior to the 1930s, up until that time they were regularly successful at the events. The deaths and injuries of cowgirls became a catalyst for the prevention of women cowgirls, and the bronco and bull riding events became exclusive to men (Arluke & Bogdan, 2013). Today, women in rodeo culture provide support for their male counterparts financially and by helping to mitigate and manage stress (Forsyth & Thompson, 2007). Many of the women who are involved in the sport come from rodeo families that boast extensive histories in rodeo. Most express a deep admiration for the sport, have grown up attending competitions, and participate in it, at least recreationally,

later in life (Forsyth & Thompson, 2007). The normative values within rodeo exclude women, although not formally, from participation in events such as bull riding. Women's participation in rodeo events is structured by informal social values and organization which encourages them to participate in barrel racing and discourages them from other events in the sport (Forsyth & Thompson, 2007).

Racing and rodeo are both sports that have been criticized for their unethical treatment of animals. Young and Gerber (2013) study the Calgary Stampede, the largest and most recognized rodeo in Canada, known as the "Greatest Outdoor Show on Earth". They highlight the significant violence and harm that is inflicted upon chuckwagon horses and outline that, although changes were made to the rules of this event in 2011, these changes did not affect the number of horse deaths per year. The event's name "Half Mile of Hell" is viewed as an appropriate title, despite the stampede's attempts to minimize the violence inherent in the "sport" (Young & Gerber, 2013). Animals are used as forms of entertainment in well-respected cultural institutions such as the Calgary Stampede, an institution that receives government and community support, yet still continues to use horses in ways that put their health and safety at risk. Young and Gerber (2013) challenge us to think critically about the social institutions we cherish and the ways in which we use animals. Studying horse racing, McManus, Albrecht and Graham (2013) examine the ethics of thoroughbred racing and highlight the fact that even successful racehorses can end up at abattoirs. They cite the example of 'Ferdinand', the 1986 Kentucky Derby winner who, after an unsuccessful breeding season in Japan, was slaughtered in 2002 (McManus, Albrecht & Graham, 2013). Although this example is contrasted with a

number of more heartwarming instances of horse burials (reminding us that the horse racing world might not be completely cold-hearted), it is still both a 'sport', like rodeo, and an industry driven in part by economic logic.

In what is arguably a stark contrast to the racing and rodeo industries, scholars (Birke, Hockenhull, & Creighton, 2010; Birke & Brandt, 2009; Latimer & Birke, 2009; Birke, 2007, 2008) have also studied natural horsemanship, a discipline of equestrian sport that promotes gentler forms of human-horse communication (Birke, 2008). In North America and Europe there has been a recent and pronounced interest in natural horsemanship (Birke, 2007). Those that practice natural horsemanship talk about the partnership they form with their equine counterparts and in many cases will speak about their horses as if they are human (Birke, 2008). Although the discipline suggests it is more natural than other equestrian disciplines, the horse's movements are still controlled by the human (Birke, 2008). There is a language within the discipline that suggests the horse is free to make its own decisions, but the objective is still to have the horse obey the human (Birke, 2008). Patton (2003) explains that, "although good trainers allow considerable latitude in acceptable responses to a given command in the early stages, ultimately what they aim to achieve is absolute obedience from the trained animal" (p.90). Despite their desire to be in control of the situation, equestrians in natural horsemanship, and in other disciplines as well, value relationships with horses over competitions. As Birke (2008) explains, horsepeople seek a feeling of closeness and interconnectedness with their horses.

Birke (2007) briefly outlines the importance of horsemanship and explains that, in the United Kingdom, the Pony Club and the British Horse Society provide a foundation for training and developing standards of equine care. However, horsemanship is a difficult skill to achieve; just because these organizations provide the resources necessary to develop horsemanship does not mean that horse owners will use the resources or aspire to improve their horse knowledge (Birke, 2007). Riders may seek out trainers that do not teach horsemanship and these riders will be limited in their knowledge of horse behaviour and how to care for horses. This is potentially dangerous to the horse and the riders' wellbeing (Birke, 2007).

Savvides (2012) examines both natural horsemanship and dressage and argues that in both disciplines humans seek to form partnerships with their horses. Communication should be encouraged because it fosters improved competitive ability and builds positive training relationships. The term partnership is used across disciplines, from rodeo to natural horsemanship, and is built through methods of training that are quite opposite (Savvides, 2012). By improving communication between human and horse, animal welfare issues can also be improved in equestrian sport and in other animal training disciplines (Savvides, 2012). Gevirtz Wicks (2012) explains, in her study of adolescent equestrians, that the relationship between a human and a horse is essential.

In Wipper's (2000) previously identified article, she outlines how riders use the term partnership to depict the type of relationship they seek to achieve with their equine counterparts. She explains that there are different kinds of human-horse relationships; some are based on fear or force and others are established through kindness and sympathy

(Wipper, 2000). Eventers do not consider relations built on force and fear to be partnerships. Although partnerships vary in degree from authoritarian and egalitarian, in eventing, the rider selects the jumping course and guides the horse through a dressage test (Wipper, 2000). The horse must jump the obstacles and must be willing to do so, but the rider regulates the direction, speed, and gait of the horse (Wipper, 2000). Thompson and Nesci (2013) also study eventing but are more centrally concerned with the concept of 'risk'. In a study of showjumping, Thompson and Birke (2013) explore perceptions of willingness in the human-horse relationship. They asked study participants to describe a horse that would make a good show-jumper. Most interviewees outlined obedience as a desirable quality, but they also repeatedly spoke "about the good show-jumping horse as a willing partner, to the extent that horses were constructed as "helpers" – not as the kind of "servant" that a relationship of obedience might suggest" (Thompson & Birke, 2013, p.73). The show jumping horse, according to the participants in Thompson and Birke's (2013) study, is a skilled and talented horse with the ability to be a show jumper, but also a horse that is a willing helper. The successful showjumping horse is constructed as an acting, thinking, willing agent, capable of saving the partnership when the rider makes an error (Thompson & Birke, 2013). A distinct habitus can be identified in the showjumping horse and the showjumping rider as constructed by the riders themselves. The habitus is mutually constitutive, the human showjumping habitus is realized through the 'rider as helper' ideology, and the equine showjumping habitus is understood by the 'horse as helper' ideology (Thompson & Birke, 2013). The rider tries not to interfere with the horse and allows the horse to become autonomous. Thompson and Birke (2013) argue that, in

showjumping, the human and equine habituses complement each other and contribute to a strong rider-horse relationship.

Thompson and Birke's (2013) study of showjumping follows from Gilbert and Gillett's (2012) study of horse breeding in Canada where they identified a trend towards breeding ponies for a specific equine habitus. Gilbert and Gillett (2012) explain that the establishment of a type of pony, known as the 'sport pony', is a response to "a different understanding of 'the pony': the idea that a pony's usefulness could be extended from being workers, companions, teachers, or babysitters to that of an athlete capable of participating in the highest level of equestrian competition" (p.637). The sport pony has a specific equine habitus that is made up of physical and cultural capital; in physical capital, it has athletic ability with an overall balanced and harmonious confirmation. In cultural capital, it has an agreeable disposition and less intimidating stature, with a good temperament that will suit both children and adults (Gilbert & Gillett, 2012). The sport pony embodies these characteristics through its equine habitus. The distinction of breed is used to classify inherent qualities in a horse, qualities that have been encouraged through nurturing, use, and through methods of breeding (Latimer & Birke, 2009). Using the Irish Draught as an example, Latimer and Birke (2009) outline that the horse is described as "big, bold, beautiful and Irish – the perfect equine partner" (p.8). However, upon further inspection, the qualities of the Irish Draft appear to have been cultivated through use, work, and breeding technologies. Additionally, these qualities have been affected by nature, for example, their even-temperedness. The Irish Draft, like the sport pony, has evolved through cross breeding and through association with particular environments and

aspects of human social life (Latimer & Birke, 2009). The practices of horse breeding evoke questions about the relation between nature and culture. Latimer and Birke (2009) contrast 'traditional' forms of colonialist English style riding (which they refer to as Anglo-Irish) with natural horsemanship, arguing that, unlike the preference for specific breeds that can be identified in other forms of equestrian sport, natural horsemanship is not interested in particular horse breeds. Natural horsemanship, as outlined previously, is concerned with improving the conditions through which horses are 'trained'. Participants in natural horsemanship argue that their practices are less cultural than other forms of equestrian sport, and more natural (Latimer & Birke, 2009).

Scholars have also examined how horseback riding fosters a feeling of embodiment (Game, 2001; Hansen, 2008, 2013). Hansen (2008) examines the narrative of an individual (who is referred to as Ken) going through a female-to-male transsexual transition and explains how the individuals relationship with his horse changes has he goes through this process. She explains that the narrative depicts agency in the horse when the individual describes how the horse views him as a sexed body. To the horse the individual is a man, based on his smell, and the horse is a "participant in the confirmation, and therefore maintenance, of hegemonic economies of difference"(Hansen, 2008, p. 88). In Hansen's (2008) paper the horse is an agent that helps the individual find embodiment in himself. In Game's (2001) study she distinguishes a form of embodiment that allows the horse and rider to become an extension of each other. Game (2001) outlines that the horse–human relationship is heightened when each participant becomes an extension of one another; the horse works the body of the rider and the rider works the body of the

horse in the 'centaur effect'. The sensation of riding a horse along a beach is the feeling that many horse-lovers dream of (Game, 2001). The centaur is a way of conceptualizing this feeling; it reflects the embodied relation between horse and rider. As Game (2001) outlines, "to live relationally with horses is to know and respect their otherness and difference, which, in turn, implies recognition of the otherness in us" (p.10). Similarly, Harraway (2003) says that we, as companion species, are engaged in naturecultures that facilitate the process of 'becoming with' each other. The act of riding, when theorized in relational terms, is a situation carried out by both horse and rider simultaneously (Game, 2001).

Riders often identify agency in horses and distinguish their ability to think on their own (Maurstad, Davis, & Cowles, 2013). Engaging together, human and horse communication is built on cues yet it also builds something new between human and horse (Maurstad et al., 2013). Depending on the human participant's preferred equestrian activity and experience, they will choose horses with different characteristics (Gorecka-Bruzda et al., 2011). Often, partnerships are perceived as something that evolves out of training. Savvides (2012) argues that many horse trainers, regardless of discipline, desire the same outcomes. Horse trainers seek to achieve the ideal partnership with their horses.

CRITICAL ANIMAL STUDIES

Many riders, coaches, and trainers explain that they form partnerships with the horses they work with. But, to what degree does a horse 'choose' to participate in equestrian sport? As outlined previously, rodeo and horse racing have been criticized for their unethical treatment of animals, and although these types of equestrianism are both

forms of sport they are also industries motivated by economic logic. Humans involved in these industries, and other equestrian industries, are often motivated by financial reward. In some cases participation in the industry is an occupation that provides their main source of income, in other instances they pursue minor financial rewards at competitions, or from the training and sales of horses. Not everyone involved in the equine industry is driven by financial reward, but the fact that some are, contributes to the complex relationships we have with animals (DeMello, 2012; Tymowski, 2013).

Critical animal studies (CAS) scholars argue that work should be done in one common field to eliminate the oppression and domination of animals (Critical Animal Studies, 2015). CAS is an interdisciplinary field rooted in animal liberation that is dedicated to "establishing a holistic total liberation movement for humans, nonhuman animals, and the Earth". Similar to fields such as Women's studies, Native American Studies, and Ethnic Studies, Critical Animal Studies advocates for theory-to-action politics (Critical Animal Studies, 2015). Following a CAS approach Morris (2013) suggest that, regardless of how we engage animals in sport, from fishing to big-game hunting, at some point all of us have had some doubt about our use of animals. CAS scholars, typically argue that animals have moral rights, and as Morris (2013) explains, harming of animals for sport is morally unacceptable. We are obliged to protect animals from being used for sport in ways that will harm them (Morris, 2013).

Studies of rodeo have argued that horses are routinely subject to accidents, injuries, and fatalities (Gerber & Young, 2013; Young & Gerber, 2013). Similarly, Atkinson and Young (2005) explain that "blood sports" such as greyhound racing are part

of figurations in society and are accepted as a form of 'tolerable' deviance. In Atkinson and Young's (2008) text, "*Deviance and Social Control in Sport*", they devote considerable attention to the subject of animal violence in sport and develop their view of tolerable deviance as a dangerously acceptable form of deviance. They argue that in North America the general public is becoming more concerned with animal cruelty. Humans today are "raised in social spaces with new habituses that are more compassionate and politically correct regarding animal cruelty" (p.90). Atkinson and Young (2008) explain that individuals outside and inside of animal sport cultures view animal suffering from a "don't ask, don't tell" perspective. They argue that the deviance that occurs in any animal blood sport is a reflection of the views of a large connected group of people with connections that span levels of society and not simply a select few (Atkinson & Young, 2008).

CAS is not only concerned with protecting animals used in blood sports but also minimizing the harm done to all animals that are used for sport. Hurn (2008) studies the commercial breeding of Welsh Cobs (a breed of horse) and explains that animals are participants in the sex industry. Animals are dominated by powerful members of society and are forced to participate in sex work (Hurn, 2008). She explains that Cobs are subjected to human ideals of gender, masculinity, and femininity, and are held to cultural ideals relating to desired human characteristics. Hurn (2008) argues that the "vast majority of human interactions with domesticated animals are exploitative and commercially motivated" (p.26). The only exception is companion animal-keeping/pet-keeping, but by domesticating animals we are establishing a hierarchal relationship

between human and animal. However, in some cases domestication may be mutually beneficial for human and animal (Clark, 2007). Serpell (2003) explains that through the domestication of wolves, the alleged ancestors of domestic dogs, the species of animal was able to thrive. Without anthropomorphism neither pet-keeping nor animal domestication would have ever happened (Serpell, 2003). Through the process of domesticating animals, such as dogs and horses, breeding for selective characteristics has caused harm to animals. The most obvious example is the English Bulldog, what Serpell (2003) refers to as, "the canine equivalent of a train wreck"(p.93). In horses there are less drastic examples of these selective breeding disasters but issues, such as navicular syndrome, causes lameness and is commonly seen in stock-type horses (such as: Quarter Horses, Appaloosas, Paints), and have high incidence in some breeds, while rarely seen in others (Kentucky Equine Research, 2015).

In an interview with a local radio station, Canadian scholar Kendra Coulter advocates for 'interspecies solidarity', moving beyond having sympathy for animals and towards recognition for how they are exploited in society (Animal Voices, 2013). She explains that, some authors frame animals as athletes, but questions why if we are comfortable framing human athletes as workers, are animal athletes not workers as well? Coulter argues that even if it is leisure for the rider it is still work for the horse (Animal Voices, 2013). How can we know if horses enjoy being ridden? Studying horses used for equine assisted therapy, Wharton, Sercu, Malone, and Macauley (2005) measured pulse rate as an indicator of animal stress and found that horses pulse rates varied depending on the time of year and between types of therapy. Equine facilitated psychotherapy returned

higher pulse rates among horses then speech language therapy, occupational therapy, or physical therapy (Warton, et al., 2005). Asking 'do horses enjoy being ridden?' is like asking, 'do humans like to work?' Do horses like to work? It is conceivable that the answer in some cases is yes, while in others it is no. Theses questions have a larger objective in the thesis and that is, they bring attention to the fact that although I conceptualize animals as athletes, they are, like human athletes, also workers. Furthermore, in the context of equestrian sport where human and animal athlete come together to perform a 'job' we should be cautious not to neglect the agency of the horse in the human-horse partnership.

Culture is often presented and studied as a human-only endeavor (Argent, 2013). Argent (2013) argues that emphasis on issues of power, and the use of animals as parts of human economic strategies, overlooks the fact that animals as social beings engage empathically, pro-socially, and cooperatively with other beings. Riding is a "joint action" and learning to move in various ways takes horses and humans many years (Argent, 2013). However, horses have been and continue to be abused, exploited, and misunderstood. A horse treated poorly, violently, and/or abused may react in a way that would make them a 'bad' partner. Horses that are treated well and nurtured use their bodies, minds, and agency to take care of their riders (Argent, 2013). As the papers in this thesis demonstrate, the horse that forms a partnership with a young female equestrian has multiple roles and responsibilities and is implicated in the gender constructions of the equine industry.

GENDER IN EQUESTRIAN SPORT

At the amateur level, approximately ninety percent of Canadian equestrian sport participants are women (Gilbert & Gillett, 2012). Scholars (Plymoth, 2013; Dashper, 2012; Butler, 2013; Hedenborg, 2007) have examined the demographics of equestrian industries with particular focus on the gender distribution within the sport. Butler (2013) examines horseracing in the United Kingdom and explains that women that participate in this social world have to adopt a racing habitus and working identities that have masculine attributes in order to be accepted. Plymoth (2013) outlines that "about 85% of the roughly 200,000 members of the [Swedish Equestrian Federation] are women" (p.149) and examines the feminisation of equestrian sport. She highlights that the mothers of young male riders are concerned over the feminisation of equestrian sport, while the youth themselves are not troubled by it. These studies are not distinctly separate from the scholarship on human-horse relations presented above, but they do address gender, masculinity, femininity, or a particularly gendered segment of the equestrian industry in some way. Literature on gender in equestrian sport is important to contextualizing this thesis because all participants are female and the focus is on the experiences of female youth equestrians. Gender influences identity formation and can impact what is gained from participation in the sport.

MASCULINITY. Although this thesis focuses on the experiences of female equestrians, studies of masculinity in equestrian sport are presented here in order to distinguish the historical and sustained elements of masculinity that are encouraged and encountered. Traditionally the ability to work with horses was a masculine quality.

Hedenborg (2007) explains that, in Sweden, horse riding was connected to masculinity as "one hundred years ago, a real man was a 'horseman'"(p.4). Today, males tend to be given more credibility in the sport and are more often considered experts (Birke and Brandt, 2009; Adelman and Knijnik, 2013). As Hedenborg and Hedenborg White (2012) explain, men outnumber women in Olympic equestrian sport, with the exception of dressage. In dressage, Dashper (2012) examines the cultural acceptance of gay men and argues that, in equestrian sport, females are subordinated and men both gay and straight are celebrated. Studying female jockeys, Velija and Flynn (2010) examine the racing figuration in the United Kingdom. Women in racing are outsiders and they attribute their lack of opportunity within the industry and sport of racing to gender differences (Velika & Flynn, 2010). Female jockeys in Velija and Flynn's (2010) study generally believed their male colleagues were physically superior to them. Therefore, women are also active in perpetrating the belief that males are superior horseback riders, although there is no biological support for this belief (Gilbert & Gillett, 2013).

Despite the privileges that males have in equestrian sport, some are concerned that efforts need to be made to maintain male interest in equestrian activities (Plymoth, 2013). Scholars have argued that there may be a difference in the way men and women experience horseback riding, and there appear to be some unique qualities to male equestrians. Larsson (2001) found that boys who participate in equestrian sport favour competition. They often participate at family stables and come from families that have a history of equestrian sport involvement (Larsson, 2001). Boys may develop qualities, such as empathy, that are not encouraged of men in other environments (Larsson, 2001).

The main aim for many boys who participate in equestrian sport is to dominate at important competitions nationally and internationally (Larsson, 2001).

Adelman and Knijink (2013) reveal that "professionals argue that 'women love horses while men love riding'" (p. 6). Birke and Brandt (2009) study gender relations in equestrian sport and argue that, from the masculine cowboy to the dressage rider who is arguably effeminate, gender differences evolve in a variety of different ways. Birke and Brandt (2009) explain that masculinity is learned through riding and human-horse embodiment whereas femininity is learned on the ground, in the stable, and in caring for horses. In contrast, Thompson (2013) studies Spanish bullfighting and suggests that footed bullfighting is portrayed as more masculine when compared to mounted bullfighting. This suggests that the cultural context is important to the experience of gender in equestrian sport.

FEMININITY. Establishing femininity is generally challenging in sport because the value system of sport and the notions of femininity are inconsistent (See: Coakley & White, 1992). Females are supposed to value carefulness over competition (Larsson, 2001; Tebelius, 2001). In harness racing, Larsen (2011) outlines "the vicious oval" as represented by the fact that women need opportunities to demonstrate and develop their skills but are unable to access them. The lack of women in top positions of harness racing contributes to the belief that women, as a whole, are not good trainers and drivers when compared to men (Larsen, 2011). Racing is a unique discipline within horse sport because unlike other equestrian activities, and other sports in general, there is no grass roots level; there are no amateur races (Vamplew & Kay, 2006). Whereas in football or

most other sports the individuals who attend the games have likely played the sport in some capacity in their lives (even if it is just a backyard game of football), in horseracing the spectators have probably never ridden a horse and it is very unlikely they have ever been in a race (Vamplew & Kay, 2006). This makes for a unique sporting experience and one that is difficult to compare to other forms of equestrian sport. In addition to the challenges of comparing gender relations across disciplines, Adelman and Knijink (2013) explain that sociocultural norms that impact equestrian sport and women's riding experiences vary across countries and continents and across social classes. Therefore, when examining gender relations in equestrian sport, discipline, geography, and social class are important variables that have been identified by scholars.

FEMALE EQUESTRIANS. At the Olympic level, women and men have been competing against one another since 1952 (dressage), 1956 (showjumping), and 1964 (eventing). Women have a history of participation in equestrian sport and their inclusion on an "equal" playing field alongside men may have been facilitated, at least initially, by the social position of these women in an upper class society (Plymoth, 2012).

People in the equestrian world often identify others and refer to themselves as "horsey". Latimer and Birke (2009) argue that "horsey" people are characterized as brave and tough (both emotionally and physically), generous, and helpful, yet still conservative. Forsberg and Tebelius (2011) explore equestrian sport in Sweden and examine how teenage girls construct their gender identity through participation in equestrian stables. In the horse stable, young girls are encouraged to be independent, powerful, and competent. Developing these skills is believed to better prepare them for their future (Forsberg &

Tebelius, 2011). Tolonen (1992) argues that, through care-giving, girls establish a feminine identity in the stable. Nonetheless, the stable girl wants to control and own the horse while simultaneously worshipping it (Tolonen, 1992). Through care and devotion, the girl learns to understand the horse and, when the horse responds, she feels appreciated (Tolonen, 1992). Nikku (2005) explains that, in the context of the stable, girls develop the ability to control and have power over a horse and care for them as needed; both caring and asserting power are necessary in horse handling.

Birke and Brandt (2009) explain that the equestrian community accommodates women and girls who do not ascribe to traditional notions of femininity when they are in the horse stable but, when an individual participates in a horse show or competition, gender-marked attire or accessories are often expected. Thus, there is a tension between the "tomboys" of the horse stable and the caring, nurturing, and compassionate horse girl that is "feminizing the horse world" (Adelman and Knijink, 2013, p.10). Plymoth (2012) argues that the femininity of the horse girl challenges conventional notions of femininity. Female equestrians are brave and energetic within their social spaces; they are leaders. The stable can act as a place where girls can escape the gender expectations of society (Rainio, 2009). Ojanen (2005, 2006) has demonstrated that, within the stable, girls feel in control. While in the stable, girls take care of horses, grooming, feeding, and riding them. They establish social norms and power hierarchies such as what to wear and what to discuss (Rainio, 2009).

The little girl that is fascinated and enchanted with horses has encouraged the growth of a retail industry. Seiter (1995) explains that the makers of *My Little Pony*

asked little girls, "'What do you see when you go to bed and close your eyes?' and the answer was often 'Horses'" (p.153). Horses and other animals are the two nonfiction topics that girls are most interested in reading about (Simpson, 1996). Girls are influenced by romantic images of horses to which they are exposed in books and films and these images shape their relationships with horses (Larsen, 2011). However, they also engage in physical work that contributes to their identity. The stable girl is able to choose an identity that does not necessarily reflect traditional gender expectations (Larsen, 2011).

In a Finnish study, Kallioniemi (1997) interviewed riding girls (eleven and twelve years old) and asked them about their motives for riding. Their responses indicated that they had dreamed of horses since they were small and that their devotion to horses went together with an overall love of animals in general. Tolonen (1992) shows that girls learn a feminine care-giving identity at the stable. According to Tolonen, the girls idealize their sacrifices. The stable girl worships the horse, but at the same time she wants to own and control it. Through her devoted care, the girl learns how to interpret the animal and when the horse responds, she feels appreciated. Similarly, Nikku (2005) identifies two sides of the stable girl, one caring side and one side concerned with power and control, both of which are needed to handle horses. In Finland, when describing girls and horses, the terms 'horse girl', 'stable girl', 'horse-crazed' and 'mad about horses' are commonly used (Rainio, 2009). I argue that these are also common terms used in North America to describe girls and horses. Rainio (2009) argues that stable girl culture is primarily a North European phenomenon, but identifies that "little girls' fondness for horses is more widespread" (p.29).

In Denmark, Rostgard (2002) highlighted three types of girls who enjoy horses. These include, "horse dreaming girls," "riding girls," and "stable girls". Rostgard (2002) explained that girls have different motives for participating in a horse stable and they often have different relationships with horses. Dreaming girls do not actually ride but are fascinated by horses. Riding girls do a variety of sports or activities and participate in horseback riding a few times a week. Stable girls spend the majority of their time in the stable, working, caring, and riding horses. Stable girls often have an established group of friends at the stable, and they are the ones that are most influenced by the stable culture (Rostgard, 2002). Girls build ideals, values, and collective norms in the stable (Tolonen, 1992).

In the epilogue of the book *Gender and Equestrian Sport* by Adelman and Knijik (Eds.) future areas of research that explore various aspects of horse sport and human-horse interactions are outlined. Thompson and Adelman (2013) explain that topics such as identity, age, class, culture, sector, environment, risk, the media, and gender (among others) are in need of further development in human-horse studies. They highlight that developing a greater understanding of these topics and gender in equestrian sport "may contribute to a broad literature on our social world today" (Thompson & Adelman, 2013: p. 196). The areas they highlight for future research are poised in sociological terminology. Although Thompson and Adelman (2013) do not formally recognize it, they suggest that sociological analysis advances the study of equestrian sport and human-horse interactions.

In the next section, I outline how theory is used in each of the stand-alone papers that are included in this thesis. Due to publication conventions, each paper was constrained in terms of how much could be said about the theories that inspired the analysis. In the theory section that follows, I develop the theories that are used in each paper in more detail. I also present a brief outline of how theory is generally used by scholars who examine human-horse relations.

THEORY

Studies have used a variety of different theoretical approaches to studying human-horse relationships, including, symbolic interactionism (Brandt, 2004), social constructivism (Forsberg & Tebelius, 2011), and figurational or process theory (Atkinson and Young, 2005; Veliji and Flynn, 2010; Young and Gerber, 2013). For instance, Velija and Flynn (2010) adopt Elias' figurational theory to study outsider relations and explain that in horse racing women are outsiders. Sociological theory has the ability to improve the study of human-horse relations by providing a means of conceptualizing horses and humans as actors in the processes that shape society. Situated within a human-animal relations or equine studies field may give more focus to the animal and provide a new way of studying society. In this section I highlight the four theoretical perspectives that are used throughout in one or more of the three papers in this thesis. Each of these perspectives is useful in understanding human-animal relations.

In papers one and three, Bourdieu's theoretical insights aid in developing an understanding of how the horse stable fosters the development of youth equestrian

identities and how the Pony Club's inability to keep up with the a changing equestrian industry has made it a less viable avenue for the accumulation of cultural capital. However, paper one combines the theoretical work of Bourdieu with Donna Haraway's insights on the interrelationship between nature and culture to explain how the horse stable figures in the equestrian sport/horseback riding experience in Canada.

In paper three, I articulate why the Pony Club in Canada has seen a decline in participation in recent years. I explain that the Pony Club still offers participants the ability to build social capital through the establishment of social networks and still offers opportunity for individuals to build their cultural capital through education and training. However, declining levels of competition at Pony Club events decreases the organization's ability to foster cultural capital through competitive opportunities. This paper builds on Bourdieu's (1978) identification that there is a social demand that has led to the development of sports such as tennis, golf, rugby, and so on. He asks: through which social conditions have these sports been produced? What leads individuals to choose one sport over another in spectatorship or participation? In this paper I explore the social demand that has led equestrians to choose other sporting opportunities over the Pony Club.

In paper two, I use George Herbert Mead's theory of interactional trust to understand how individuals build trust with their horse in the in order to participate in equestrian competitions. I combine this issue with an examination of how trust is formed between a rider and the social system within which they are competing. This combination forms a unique type of trust - an interspecies trust - where the combination

of the two forms of trust encourages participation in youth equestrian competitions. I develop each of these theoretical insights in this section.

SOCIAL CLASS, CAPITAL & FIELDS OF CULTURAL REPRODUCTION

Sociologist and theorist Pierre Bourdieu made significant contributions to the study of social class. As Gilbert and Gillett (2012) explain, equestrian sport is an example of an area of production wherein 'sports products' are generated. Equestrian sport produces different types of horses depending on the discipline (Gilbert & Gillett, 2012). Horses act as social agents participating in horse sport events but they are also a product that is consumed. Bourdieu (1984) explains that agents, human or nonhuman, and their social positions are located within a field. An agent's social position is influenced by the interaction between the rules of a field (in this case equestrian sport) and the agent's capital and habitus.

Bourdieu (1984) explains that class is reproduced in and through the sites that we occupy in society, in what he refers to as fields. He outlines that our social position within society or our position within a field influence the forms of capital that we possess. These forms of capital are economic, social, symbolic, and cultural. Social capital is generally the value and/or resources that social networks are capable of producing. Cultural capital refers to qualities and objects beyond economic capital that enable an individual to progress in society such as education, physical appearance, style of dress, and so on. Symbolic capital is earned on an individual basis and, in certain contexts, some people are perceived to be more valuable than others. For instance, a doctor that makes a lifesaving discovery has symbolic capital that might aid him/her in social circles beyond the hospital

because people now attribute more value to them. Economic capital is the monetary or exchange-value that an individual possesses. If they were to divulge all their assets, how much would they be worth?

Bourdieu (1984) demonstrates that our ability to advance through the ranks of society is more complex than we might think. Our success in life is a product of our social networks, norms, values, tastes, economics, education, physical appearance, and achievements. The activities and past-times that we engage in have the ability to shape us, and they contribute to what Bourdieu (1978) refers to as our habitus. A habitus organizes and directs social action; it is a set of embodied and internalized dispositions that structure an individual's sense of self with regards to their character, perception, and taste (Gilbert & Gillett, 2012; Bourdieu, 1978; Kay & Laberge, 2002). The concepts of field, cultural reproduction, capital (in its various forms), and habitus are used in papers one and three of this thesis. I use Bourdieu's work to examine what is gained from participation in youth equestrian sport (paper 1) and why the Canadian Pony Club has seen declining rates of participation in recent years (paper 3).

The horse stable allows young equestrians to develop a range of femininities, those that are masculine and reflect the required duties of the stable, and those that are feminine and reflect the culture of the horse show competition. Young female equestrians develop an equestrian habitus whereby they are strong and competent enough to participate in manual labour around the stable but refined and poised when competing at horse shows and competitions. Studying women jockeys in horse racing, Bjork-Billings (2012) explains that female jockeys develop a 'radical habitus' that is "experienced at a

deeply embedded level of body awareness, or embodiment and comprises the resilient enduring element that sustains women riders in their difficult quest to compete in a male-dominated milieu" (p.8). Unlike most disciplines in equestrian sport, where at the amateur levels the number of female participants overwhelmingly dominates the activity, in horse racing men control the sport. Butler (2013) explains that women have a hard time proving their worth in horse racing; when they are successful, they are treated as an exception to the rule.

Social positions within fields (such as the horse stable) are influenced by social attributes such as class and gender (Bourdieu, 1984). Bjork-Billings (2012) argues that, in western culture, the horse is a means of achieving, demonstrating and improving economic, social, symbolic, and cultural capital. As individuals from a more diverse range of socio-economic backgrounds have become involved in horseback riding (see paper 1), it is plausible that the values and norms of more than one social class will come to influence the social space. However, in the case of Canadian horse stables, the process of cultural reproduction has maintained the traditional culture of the stable.

BEYOND SOCIOLOGICAL DUALISMS: 'NATURECULTURES'

It is not enough to say that there has been a process of cultural reproduction in Canadian horse stables over the years; we must also understand what 'culture' was reproduced. What do we understand to be the culture of the horse stable? Donna Haraway (1991) explains that, to understand culture, we must dismiss the idea that culture is an exclusive concept and move away from the binary division we have created between culture and nature because the two are intrinsically linked. Haraway (1991) introduces

"naturecultures" as a term that satisfies the interconnectedness of nature and culture. Latimer and Birke (2009) explain that the terms "natural" and "nature" have been marginalized in sociological research. They posit that sociologists have argued that there are no natural elements of society or that scholars have dismissed the concept of nature in their attempts to go beyond the dualism of nature/culture (Latimer & Birke, 2009). Moving beyond the nature/culture divide means adapting post-colonial thinking strategies because culture, in itself, is connected to masculine domination in society (Latimer & Birke, 2009).

Human and nonhuman historical naturecultures have shaped our cultural consciousness and have designed what we believe to be natural. Haraway's contribution to this paper is that her theoretical perspective allows us to understand the horse stable as a space that has been created through nature and culture. The horse stable as described here is not restricted to the built environment of a barn. It encompasses built environments and natural environments such as the fields, forests, and outdoor spaces that make up the stable experience. The stable is removed from larger society, whether that is physically and/or metaphorically, and it offers an opportunity for equestrians to feel like they are closer to nature. People often explain that they feel that riding a horse through an open field or along a beach brings them closer to nature. However, in this paper the idea of nature and culture as distinct phenomena that can be experienced independent of one another is challenged.

Moving beyond the horse stable, the second paper in this thesis examines how trust influences an individual's decision to participate in equestrian sport at a competitive

level. The paper draws on George Herbert Mead's (1934) interactional trust and Niklas Luhmann's (1988) social systems trust and argues that, in order to compete in equestrian sport, riders must have trust in their horse and trust in the equestrian community within which they are competing.

A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH TO INTERSPECIES TRUST

In an analysis of the horse-human relationship in the discipline of eventing, Wipper (2000) argues that mutual respect, confidence, close communication, and trust are important to the training process. She uses a symbolic interactionist perspective drawing on the work of Herbert Blumer, Charles Horton Cooley, and George Herbert Mead to demonstrate that eventers do not see horses as mindful and intelligent in the Meadian sense; they view the thinking of humans and horses as different but they do not view horses as mindless automatons. The participants in Wipper's (2000) study outlined that horses are capable of being a good or bad jumper, being smart or unintelligent, and making bad or good decisions. An individual's ability to understand the mind and thinking of their horses leads to better human-horse partnerships (Wipper, 2000). Part of this human-horse partnership is the establishment of trust. In the second paper in this thesis, I build on Wipper's (2000) seminal work by exploring interactional trust in competitive youth equestrian sport; I move beyond her work by suggesting that, in order to understand trust in interspecies sport, we must also understand social systems trust as informed by Niklas Luhmann's work.

INTERACTIONAL & SOCIAL SYSTEM TRUST. The second paper in this thesis explains that, in competitive youth equestrian sport, both human and horse are

capable of 'taking the perspective of the other' (Mead, 1934). Human and horse have their associated roles and, in performing them, they develop their joint action. Trust is established when both horse and human are able to confidently believe that the other is taking their point of view into account. Each participant, horse and human, respects the partnership throughout the decision making process (Weber & Carter, 1998). In this paper, I outline that interactional trust is developed through the human-horse relationship, as Wipper (2000) also demonstrated, but I also examine how young equestrians come to trust the social system within which they are competing.

In his address of social system trust, Luhmann (1992) fails to account for the type of trust that is outlined in the interactional approach. He argues that, in a modern society, trust based on values and norms, or psychic systems as he refers to them, will not succeed (Jalava, 2003). Social system trust is made possible through communication. In modern society, in order to be prepared for societal changes, we need to deploy trust (Jalava, 2003). Humans are organizational and physical entities that are environmental parts of the social system (Luhmann, 1992). He believes that social systems are a composition of communicative processes and therefore humans are not constrained by social roles, structures, or norms (Jalava, 2003). In competitive youth equestrian sport, this means that riders must trust the social system within which they are competing. Trust in coaches, trainers, horse breeders, horse show organizers, among others, contributes to the success of the equestrian. Forming interactional trust with their horse is part of the equestrian's process towards success but it is not the sole determinant of success. If an equestrian

does not trust the social system within which they are competing, they will likely have a negative experience and be compelled to withdraw from competition.

Theoretically and substantively, this thesis contributes to sociology, sociology of sport, and equine studies. It argues for a mixed theoretic and a mixed method approach. In the next section, I outline the mixed methods approach that is used by all three papers in this thesis. In each of the papers, publication restrictions limited the degree to which I could explain my methodological approach. In the methods section that follows, I am able to articulate why mixed methods are important to the analysis of youth equestrian sport in more detail.

METHODS

In this program of research, I use a mixed method approach that combines document analysis, media analysis, and semi-structured interviews. Using this method allows for consideration of processes and structures and enables me to bridge micro-macro levels of analysis (Woolley, 2009). Using a mixed method approach provides a more comprehensive understanding of the problems and questions I am exploring. For instance, in examining the horse stable, it is useful to have interviews with former Pony Club members as well as media accounts that depict and highlight the character of a stable. Similarly, when examining trust, it is useful to have blog entries and magazine columns that explain the human-horse relationship in such passionate and unreserved ways, but also interviews with current/former equestrians that can tell you how they developed trust in their horses. When looking at trends and historical developments in

equestrian sport, it is useful to have equine industry documents and reports to help inform the analysis. Interviewees can reveal what they experienced but reports and documents can provide a broader view of the industry at particular moments in history. Through triangulation, or what was traditionally called multiple operationalism (Campbell & Friske, 1959), the media analysis, document analysis, and interview data complement each other and build a stronger form of analysis. It allows for the development of more nuanced distinctions and permits me to use parts of the data to deepen my understanding and elaborate on phenomena that emerge in other parts of the data (Woolley, 2009).

I am interested in the experiences of female equestrians during their youth for a variety of reasons. Firstly, at amateur levels, females represent approximately ninety percent of the equine industry (Gilbert & Gillett, 2012). Secondly, among those who participate in equestrian competitions, children outnumber adults almost twice as much. Equine Canada (2010) estimates that approximately 117,000 adults and 225,250 children in Canada participate in equestrian competitions of some kind. This figure is relevant because, in paper two, I explore how trust is a necessity for sustained involvement in competitive youth equestrian sport and, by examining youth, I am studying a majority portion of the competitive equestrian population. This may provide insight into how trust is developed between horse and rider and between rider and community in the equine industry as a whole.

DOCUMENT ANALYSIS. This program of research began in the fall of 2011 with the collection, review, and document analysis of equine industry documents. These

studies can be found on the Equine Canada website[1] and include the 2003 Domestic Research Study, the 2003 Export Market Opportunities Study, and the 2010 Canadian Horse Industry Profile Study. The studies, to various degrees, provide an overview of the equestrian industry in Canada with regards to how many horses are in Canada, how many people are involved in equestrian sport, recreation, and leisure in Canada, what types of disciplines these individual are involved in, how they keep their horses, traceability of horses, herd management, and the economic contribution that the horse industry makes to Canadian society. In addition to the Equine Canada industry studies, twelve years of Canadian Pony Club annual reports were collected[2]. Through an analysis of these documents and reports, it became clear that, although there have been provincial variations in Canadian Pony Club membership levels over the years, overall "membership over the last 25 years has declined over 1800 members"(CPC Annual Report, 2012, p. 65). This decline in participation is interesting because the Equine Canada industry studies suggest that between 2003 and 2010 more people became actively involved in the horse industry. In 2003, Equine Canada estimated that 750,000 Canadians were actively involved in the horse industry each year (Equine Canada, 2003). In 2010, Equine Canada estimated that 855,000 people were participating in the horse industry (Equine Canada, 2010). I am interested in why Pony Club has witnessed declining participation rates over the last twenty-five years for the purposes of understanding whether the decline in Pony Club reflects changes in the horse stable and equestrian sport as a whole. These questions explore the socio-cultural aspects of equestrian sport, recreation, and leisure in Canada.

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[1] Available at: http://equinecanada.ca/industry/index.php?option=com_content&view=section&id=103&Itemid=559&lang=en

[2] Available at: http://www.canadianponyclub.org/resources.php?page=downloads&topic=reports

RESEARCHER BACKGROUND. I come to this program of research as a former Pony Club member and current equestrian in the Canadian equine industry. I was a member of the Canadian Pony Club for almost ten years and I thoroughly enjoyed the education, training, and social aspects of Pony Club in which I engaged while involved with the organization. Therefore, I may bring some bias to this research as I am also currently involved in the equestrian industry (but no longer in the Pony Club). Equine Canada outlines that most individuals who are involved in the Canadian equine industry have been involved with horses for over ten years (Equine Canada, 2010). Similarly, I began my relationship with the equine industry over twenty-five years ago. Although I have had periods in my life when I have not been riding or visiting horse stables regularly, I have never felt entirely disconnected from the industry. This familiarity with horses and the equine industry appeared to be comforting to my interviewees and was helpful when studying equestrian industry documents, reports, websites, blogs, and magazines. Having prior knowledge of the equestrian industry in Ontario was like a toolbox of resources from which I was able to pull throughout this study.

In 2008 and 2009 I worked as a research assistant for a consulting company that conducts research on the equestrian industry, both provincially in Ontario and nationally across Canada. While with this company, I was working on projects that, although not used as resources in this study (because they are outside the scope of this research), were important as I was familiar with the previous and future research that the company would be doing. Subsequently, I was able to look for these studies when I began this program of research. Scholars have explained that, within the equine industry, there are a set of

unique cultural languages (Birke, 2007; Dashper, 2012); my knowledge and familiarity with the slang, terms, and expressions that are used throughout the horse industry was an aid in this study. Although participants appeared to be comforted by my "complete member" (Adler & Adler, 1987) status within the equine industry, it may have influenced my ability to engage in unbiased research (Dashper, 2012).

INTERVIEWS. Recruitment of interviewees was facilitated by the use of the Canadian Pony Club alumni database which is publically available through the Canadian Pony Club website[3]. In 2009, the Canadian Pony Club prepared a commemorative book for its 75th anniversary. They asked former members to submit stories and pictures of their experiences in Pony Club that were then included in the book. In addition to the book, they developed the alumni database as a means for former Pony Clubbers to connect with past friends. In the database, individuals include their name, the Pony Club with which they were involved, the years in which they were involved, their email, and, in some cases, individuals left a comment about their experience in Pony Club. Almost all of those who left comments talked about positive experiences. One entry said, "I love Pony Club…It was the best time I had in the horse industry. I competed in National Quiz 3 times and each time was fantastic! The people, the horses; very fun!" (Alumni Database, 2011). Some entries shared more detailed accounts of their experiences and others did not include a comment. I retrieved the list from the database on September 23rd, 2011 and at the time there were approximately 300 entries in the database. These entries were from all across Canada. I then began the task of narrowing the list to

[3] Available at: http://canadianponyclub.org/Misc/alumni/alumni2.php

individuals who participated in Pony Club in Ontario. My criteria for my interviewees was that their participation in Pony Club took place in Ontario, but not all of my interviewees were still living in Ontario at the time of their interviews. While narrowing the list to Ontario interviewees, it was helpful that I had participated in Pony Club in Ontario myself because, in order to determine what province an individual had been a participant in, I would have to identify their branch as an Ontario club. The Canadian Pony Club website lists which clubs are in particular areas and this list was used as reference throughout this process. Further, some entries did not include their email and therefore there was no way of contacting these individuals. Eight individuals were contacted in late 2011 and early 2012 for the study's pilot interviews and all agreed to take part.

The pilot interviews ranged in length from seventeen to thirty-five minutes. They lacked depth and, although the questions generally fulfilled the needs of the study, there was room for more probing questions. These questions were added and the interview guide was restructured to allow for a more natural flow and progression. Subsequent interviews ranged in length from thirty-five to ninety minutes. The interview guide included questions regarding trajectories into equestrian sport and early childhood experiences at competitions, with the Pony Club, and in the horse stable. It also asked participants to explain and outline the human-horse connection and challenged them to articulate the nature of the human-horse relationship. Some participants outlined how equestrian sport, in their opinion, positively influenced their physical, mental, and emotional health. Interviews were recorded with the permission of participants and all

interviewees were asked at the conclusion of the interview if there was anyone whom they could refer to the study. The intention with contacting individuals off the database list was to use individuals who agreed to an interview, either by phone or in person, to then develop a snowball sample. However, individuals who had been contacted through the database were often reluctant to refer their former Pony Clubbers to me. In many cases respondents claimed they had lost contact with their former club mates. For this reason, I decided to expand my recruitment process to include calls for participants posted on the social media site Facebook in relevant "groups" of the Ontario region Canadian Pony Club chapters (Western Ontario Region; St. Lawrence, Ottawa Valley Region; Central Ontario Region). Through this process I obtained interviewees whom I knew personally and also interviewees I did not know previously. Individuals who I knew or were associated with my own Pony Club experiences were much more enthusiastic about referring me to other former Pony Clubbers or contacting their friends about my study. Snowball sampling was much more successful within the group of interviewees who knew me prior to learning about the study.

A total of forty-three semi-structured interviews were conducted with current or former Pony Club members. All interviewees were over the age of eighteen, all participated in Pony Club in Ontario, and all identified as female. Interviewees were not asked to identify their race or ethnicity. Interviewees were all adults at the time of interview but were asked about their youth equestrian experiences because equine industry documents suggest that participation in equestrian sport often begins in childhood or adolescence but is sustained or resumed in adulthood. Of the forty-three

interviewees, ten were conducted face-to-face and thirty-three were conducted over the phone because of geographic or time restrictions. When interviews were conducted in person, they were conducted at the individual's home or farm or in a restaurant or coffee shop. One interviewee chose to ride her horse while the interview was conducted. Field notes were taken during in-person interviews and used to supplement the interview transcripts. Interviews were conducted over the course of approximately a year and a half. Interviewees in this study ranged in age from eighteen years old to seventy-three years old. Interviewees were organized into three age categories which included: under thirty years old (ten interviewees), thirty to fifty years old (twenty-one interviewees), and over fifty years old (twelve interviewees). All interviews were transcribed for the purposes of analysis.

MEDIA ANALYSIS. In addition to document analysis of industry research and semi-structured interviews, I also conducted a media analysis of equestrian industry websites, magazines, and blogs. Approximately one hundred different equestrian related websites, blogs, and online magazines were examined in this media analysis and the themes that presented over these sources were used to better understand the themes that presented in the analysis of equine industry research and the semi-structured interviews. Here I highlight only a few that were used to shape this program of research.

Among my media search and analysis was an Internet search for "girls and horses blog" which led me to the *Girls Horse Club Blog* and subsequently to the *Girls Horse Club* site in general. I searched for "equestrian community online blog" which led me to the *Barnmice Equestrian Social Community* in which I found blogs, forums, photo

sharing, and a marketplace. I also studied the Equine Canada website and the Pony Club website. The Pony Club is the site of the British Pony Club, which was the inspiration for the creation of the Canadian Pony Club. I searched "equestrian Canada" and found the site *Equestrian Connection* which claims to be "Canada's largest equestrian website focusing on the FEI equestrian disciplines of dressage, eventing, and hunter/jumper" (Equestrian Connection, 2013). I also had sites sent to me by colleagues and friends who knew that I was studying the equestrian community in some respect. One individual directed me to the *Rookie* entry titled 'Understanding Horse Girls.' *Rookie* is directed at teenage girls and has been developed as an online publication that publishes writing, videos, and art from a variety of contributors (Rookie, 2013). The site offers monthly "issues" that are developed around themes (Rookie, 2013). Given my interest in equestrian sport as pursued by female youth, this particular piece was informative. Other magazines I examined included *Horse Sport* and *The Chronicle of the Horse*. These magazines have a specific equine focus and cover topics in the equine industry, horse care and veterinary advice, and articles on a variety of different issues.

This mixed method approach using document analysis, interviews, and media analysis was employed concurrently and as themes presented they informed the analysis. There were some challenges to this research. One individual declined to participate in the study because she had a bad experience in Pony Club; despite my attempts to ensure her that I was interested in all experiences, she was not interested in participating. Further, people who work with horses often spend a significant amount of time in the barn. They are not always available for an interview. As a researcher, I had to be flexible to meet

interviewees whenever and wherever they were available, or call them whenever was convenient for them. In practice, this meant meeting them at farms, restaurants, or their homes and calling them early in the morning or late at night.

POTENTIAL BIAS. To evaluate romanticism in this study I looked at 1) researcher bias, 2) recruitment strategies, 3) data collection – but more specifically probing strategies in semi-structured interviews. Methodologically, this program of research uses a combination of document analysis, media analysis, and interviews. The interviews ask participants for their retrospective accounts of their youth participation in Pony Club, equestrian sport generally, and the horse stable. The challenge with retrospective accounts is that it is possible that the individuals giving these accounts are romanticizing them. Throughout the analysis portions of this thesis I actively considered two possibilities, 1) are my respondents romanticizing their youth equestrian experiences? 2) am I romanticizing their youth equestrian experiences or somehow contributing to that romanticism? I came to the conclusion that it is possible that I am biased, but I have done my best to mitigate this bias. There are a variety of ways that I may be biased. Firstly, I bring a certain degree of researcher bias to the study given that I am an equestrian and a former Pony Club member. Secondly, I used a variety of recruitment strategies including snowball sampling, calls for participants on relevant social media pages, and the use of the Canadian Pony Club alumni database in an attempt to mitigate recruitment bias but it is possible that this produced a data set that was more positive then the population as a whole. Thirdly, although I employ a mixed methods approach which should reduce bias in the data, in my semi-structured interviews I use probing questions. Depending on the

theoretical approach one takes to research, probing questions have different uses. Positivists, such as symbolic interactionists, use probing questions as a means of obtaining as much empirical data as possible. Social constructionists use probing questions in order to develop a better understanding of the participant's account. The social constructionist is interested in how the respondent conceives their answer. Ethnographers, meanwhile, want to understand the meaning behind the response and they probe to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the meaning.

In my approach to probing questions, I employed a social constructionist perspective. I am interested in the accounts, and therefore, if the account has been romanticized, that is not the primary concern. I explore how individuals perceive their childhood experiences in horseback riding retrospectively. I found that my interviewees' retrospective accounts were positive, but there was a consistent understanding of how others might experience it as negative. Participants in this study may have romantic visions through which they recall their childhood horseback riding experiences because they are removed from their childhood experiences in horseback riding. It is possible that they are remembering and describing more favorable experiences then they actually experienced. This is a challenge of retrospective research, however, this romanticism is a true representation of how these individuals account for their experiences.

Before moving into the three papers that make up this thesis I feel it is useful to briefly outline, for those who are not familiar with it, what the Pony Club is. In the next section I highlight the history of the Pony Club as it began in Britian and was brought to Canada. I outline the cost of participation and the objectives of the organization. This

introduction will help readers understand the type of participant that was interviewed for this program of research.

PAPER 1:
YOUNG EQUESTRIANS: THE HORSE STABLE AS A CULTURAL SPACE

This paper was published in the anthology *Sports, Animals, and Society* that was edited by James Gillett and Michelle Gilbert in 2013. It is included here in its published form with permission from Routledge. The paper analyzes youth female participation in horse stables and outlines how this space is active in shaping the gendered identities of female equestrians in a unique way. By employing sociological theory, the paper contributes to our understanding of social spaces, for example the horse stable as neither entirely cultural nor entirely natural. However, there are three weaknesses in the paper. Firstly, although somewhat minor, it is important to distinguish a factual inconsistency. In the paper it is argued that there is currently approximately 5,800 members active in the Canadian Pony Club as cited by an Equine Canada industry study in 2010. Subsequent research suggests that this number is actually much lower with a more accurate national membership between approximately 2,300 members (cited in the 2012 Canadian Pony Club Annual Report) and 3,500 (as stated on the Canadian Pony Club website[4]). Secondly, the title of the paper does not accord with the analysis in the paper. The title of the paper identifies the horse stable as a 'cultural space' but the analysis is developed around the idea that nature and culture must be considered collectively because nature inevitably influences culture and vice versa. A more appropriate title would highlight the

[4] Available at: http://www.canadianponyclub.org/about-us.php

horse stable as a natureculture rather than a cultural space. Thirdly, the paper draws heavily on the interview data and (to a lesser extent) document analysis that was generated in this thesis, yet the paper claims to have employed a mixed method approach using document analysis, media analysis, and semi-structured interviews. In what follows, I contextualize this paper with a discussion of pertinent media that informs the analysis but this discussion was omitted due to length restrictions in the original version.

UNDERSTANDING THE HORSE GIRL

Experiences between human and horse, in sport, recreation, and leisure, across time and space, and in a variety of places, have shaped the 'horse girls' of today and how we have come to perceive them. *Rookie* is an online publication intended for teenage girls that features photography, writing, videos, and illustrations (Rookie, 2013). On January 18, 2013, the site published an article titled, "Understanding Horse Girls: I thought they were boring, spoiled, and weird. Boy was I wrong." The article is a story about the author's encounters with a childhood acquaintance that was a horse girl. At the beginning of the article, the author outlines her definition of horse girls and says:

> Horse Girls, as I've always understood it, are girls who are absolutely obsessed with horses to the point where horses consume every aspect of their lives–what they read, what they wear, what they watch, and how they relate to the rest of the universe. It's not essential to own a horse in order to be a Horse Girl (many Horse Girls cling to the dream of a horse, someday), but many actually do own them, and are involved in equestrian competitions; the rest at least go riding, and early on find a kinship with

> the animals, a relationship that is often misunderstood by others, who find the whole thing to be a bit much (I used to count myself among this ignorant mass).

This description of horse girls is insightful and remarkably consistent with descriptions that can be found when accessing horse industry blogs, websites, and magazines. This description is also consistent with the definitions that I was given by interviewees in this program of research. As equine industry websites suggest, for horse girls, horses consume every aspect of their lives, but you do not have to own a horse to be a horse girl. On one horse industry blog, a contributor wrote, "Ever wonder when your love for horses started? I am trying to recall my first memory of loving horses but frankly, I hit a dark wall. I can't remember ever *NOT* loving them! Maybe I was born loving them?" In her conclusion she explains, "My point is I feel as if horses are in my blood. I can't remember the first time I knew I loved them" (GHC, November 15th, 2009, "When Horses Found a Place in My Heart"). Another blogger on the same site wrote an entry titled "Girls and Horses" where she rhetorically asked her reader why they (herself included) loved horses so much, wondering "what is it with girls and horses?" Throughout her entry, she suggests that it is a combination of a lot of things but includes the feeling one gets when they ride a horse, the beauty of a horse, and the kind and sweet personality of a horse (GHC, October 11th, 2009, "Girls and Horses"). This blog entry was inspired by a song for which she includes a link at the end of her entry. The song, *Girls & Horses* by Templeton Thompson, features a chorus that repeatedly asks "what is it with girls and horses?" The song and the associated music video depict the relationship between a girl

and horses from childhood through to adulthood[5]. The lyrics of the song describe the all-encompassing relationship between a girl and a horse and how the horse can act as a protector, a means of escaping the stress of a girl's life, and a confidence booster that helps a girl overcome life's obstacles. Throughout the blogs, websites, and magazines that target youth female equestrians, there is an underlying theme whereby young equestrian girls know they are different than other girls; they know that their love of horses is not understood by everyone, but they believe it is inherent in them. Curiously, they are in many cases incapable of identifying why it is they have become obsessed with horses.

The author of the *Rookie* article mentioned previously is not a horse girl but is reflexive about her relationship with her horse girl acquaintance 'Becky.' She explains that horse girls, as bizarre as they might seem, are deeply in love with horses. Moreover, what appears to be bragging is actually the girl trying to share her love of horses with others. She writes:

> What do any of us do when we fall deeply in love with something? We try to carry it with us wherever we go. We wear a band's T-shirt or scratch their lyrics on our desks, we tattoo names on our skin, we take a million pictures and post them online for the world to see. Our lives begin to revolve around our loves. Maybe I was never jealous of Becky for having a horse—maybe I envied her for having such a strong connection to *something*, for being in love long before I even understood the concept.

[5] The music video can be viewed here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=84crwQZVIgg

In the above comment, the author offers insight into how we as a society might make sense of horse girls. In her conclusion, she outlines that "horse girls seem to understand obsessive fandom and devotion before the rest of us do, and that's pretty amazing" (Rookie, 2013). I think this discussion of horse girls is interesting because it speaks to what is gained by participation in the horse stable and equestrian sport - the confidence to be different, to act differently, and to be comfortable with that difference. The horse girl, as I outline in this paper, is encouraged to develop a range of femininities; they form a habitus that is unique, and they have opportunities to build responsibility, feel a sense of escape, and feel a sense of empowerment through accomplishments. In the paper that follows, I demonstrate how the horse stable shapes both masculinity and femininity in the identities of youth female equestrians.

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Equestrian sport and the culture within the equestrian stable were traditionally based upon a masculine hierarchical regime (Plymoth, 2012). The sport was reserved for military men (Bryant, 2008) and was an exclusive and aristocratic pastime catering to upper-class society (Gilbert & Gillett, 2012; Riedi, 2006). A military pursuit aimed at improving the skill and efficiency of calvary (Gilbert & Gillett, 2012; Plymoth, 2012), the first equestrians to compete at the Olympic Games were exclusively men (Bryant, 2008; Sweeley, 1972). Eventually male and female civilian participants were granted permission to participate in equestrian sport (Bryant, 2008). As Adelman (2011) explains, the end of the nineteenth century brought about change through material and symbolic struggles over the female body and femininity. Beliefs regarding female capability and expectable practice were challenged (Adelman, 2011). As women started to see progress in other sporting realms, they also began to ride astride (with legs on either side of the saddle), and safety and interest in equestrian sport improved. Once an aristocratic pastime for the upper class in Europe and North America (Gilbert & Gillett, 2012; Riedi, 2006), in some ways equestrian sport has changed significantly. Girls and young women have become overrepresented as members of youth riding organizations and in amateur equestrian sport as compared with boys and young men. Today women represent

approximately seventy-nine percent of the Canadian equine industry (Equine Canada, 2010). The median annual household incomes of those involved in the Canadian equine industry are between $60,000 to $80,000 (Equine Canada, 2010). Demographics of equestrian sport have changed; however, cultural aspects of horseback riding have maintained the public perception that the sport is an elitist pastime (Dashper, 2012).

This paper aims to better understand the horse stable through an analysis of (1) the experiences of women who grow up participating in competitive horse sports and (2) the way social class and gender relations are understood, embodied, reinforced, and/or challenged through involvement in the sport. I am interested in the horse stable experiences of current/former members of the Canadian Pony Club. Using a retrospective mixed method approach, including semistructured interviews, media analysis, and document analysis, I ask women to recall and explain their youth equestrian experiences. The horse stable is a unique social space that offers young women the opportunity to engage in manual labor, caring and nurturing practices, and physical activity and sport. To understand the horse stable and its role in equestrian sport I derive my theoretical direction from Bourdieu's (1978) work on the practice of cultural reproduction and Haraway's (2003) conception of "natureculture." Whereas a vast majority of other sports, physical activities, and leisure sites are saturated with hegemonically male ideologies and practices, this paper examines how the physical culture of equestrian sport is one wherein young girls are structurally and culturally able to explore a range of femininities.

In recent years scholars have made significant contributions to the literature on equestrian sport, horseback riding, and horse-human relations. Three areas of this

research that are important to this study are gender in equestrian sports (Adelman, 1998, 2010, 2011; Birke & Brandt, 2009; Dashper, 2012; Forsberg & Tebelisu, 2011; Gilbert & Gillett, 2013; Hedenborg & Hedenborg White, 2012; Ojanen, 2012;Tourre-Malen, 2003), sociocultural studies of equestrian sport and equine industries (Equine Canada, 2003, 2010; Gilbert & Gillett, 2013; Hedenborg, 2007; Helmer, 1991; Merlini, 2004; Thompson, 2012), and studies of human-horse relationships (Birke, 2004, 2007, 2008; Brandt, 2004; Dorrance, 1987; Game, 2001; Gilbert & Gillett, 2012; Keaveney, 2008; Latimer & Birke, 2009; Thompson, 2011; Thompson & Nesci, 2011; Wipper, 2000). I outline the contributions scholars have made to these three areas of research and highlight scholarly endeavors that I will draw upon in my analysis of the horse stable in Canada.

SOCIOCULTURAL STUDIES OF EQUESTRIAN SPORT AND EQUINE INDUSTRIES

Equine Canada (2010) estimates that there are over 900,000 horses living in Canada. These horses are predominantly used in the "entertainment/leisure sectors" of the Canadian economy (Equine Canada, 2010). As of 2010, there were approximately 855,000 people active in the Canadian equine industry, including people who ride or drive horses, who own horses (directly or through a syndicate), or who are responsible for the care of horses (i.e., trainers or stable operators) (Equine Canada, 2010). The most common Canadian equine industry participant is female, between fifty and fifty-nine years old, has some postsecondary education, is living in a household with a median annual income of $60,000 to $80,000, has other companion animals (e.g., dogs or cats), and has been riding or driving horses for over ten years (Equine Canada, 2010). Many of the individuals currently involved in the equine industry have had a lasting relationship

with the industry and equestrian sport throughout their lives. However, as Kay (2008) explains, equestrian sport comprises a diverse range of events and activities such as pony clubs, dressage, mounted games, eventing, steeplechase, polo, carriage driving, and horseracing. To understand equestrian sport we must acknowledge the variety of ways in which people participate in the sport and also consider similarities and differences across nations (Hedenborg & Hedenborg White, 2012). For instance, Dashper (2012) outlines that in the United Kingdom equestrian sport is often perceived to be elitist and marginal, but 4.3 million people in Britain ride horses on a regular basis (British Horse Industry Confederation, 2009).

HORSE-HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS

The traditional use of horses was as a form of functional livestock (Gilbert & Gillett, 2012). Today the horse is more commonly seen as a companion animal or "equine athlete" (Gilbert & Gillett, 2012). The horse is a unique form of companion because it is tamable yet wild (Birke, 2008). The animal's perceived allusiveness, as Birke (2008) explains, makes it important to many cultural myths and metaphors. In the equine industry the horse is important to the sport and the disciplines and collectives within the equestrian social world (Birke, 2008). Studying the backstretch of harness racing, Helmer (1991) explains, "the horse itself constitutes the focus of a cultural system" (p. 176). The horse is more then a means of engaging in equestrian sport. Game (2001) explains that, through training, humans and horses form connections between one another. Horses look to humans for emotional support through the training process, allowing humans to tie them up, clip and groom them, and ride/drive them (Game, 2001). Stables allow for the

training process to take place, and the stable encourages the horse-human relationship by highlighting the horse's dependency upon humans in modern society. Game (2001) argues that training is then "a mixing of human and horse society" (p. 4). Wipper (2001) explains that in the equestrian discipline of eventing, trust must be established between horse and human in order to stay safe and avoid injuries for both athletes. The trust between a horse and rider is fragile and can be broken if not carefully attended to (Wipper, 2001). Interest in improving horse-human communication has presented in the equine industry in the form of new equine disciplines like natural horsemanship (NH). Birke (2007) explains that in studying the principles of NH, humans have to learn new ways of working with horses. These individuals learn to communicate with their horses, and the two acquire a mutual respect for one another (Birke, 2007). Birke and Brandt (2009) explain that understanding the human-horse relationship is useful in exploring the dynamics of gender and how gender is experienced through the body.

GENDER IN EQUESTRIAN SPORTS

Equestrian sport has a strong masculine origin, but it is now associated more with women and girls (Birke & Brandt, 2009). Women and girls now dominate equestrian sport numerically, and participation has spread across a wider range of socioeconomic groups (British Equestrian Trade Association, 2006). Perceptions of the sport are still influenced by the history of upper-class masculinity that characterized it the 1900s (Dashper, 2012). Despite popular belief, males do not have a physical advantage over females in equestrian sport (Dashper, 2012). A strong male is not advantaged over a female because the horse is always the strongest participant in the human-horse partnership (Dashper, 2012). Sporting

attributes such as strength and speed that are often associated with masculinity are less significant in equestrian sport than they are in other sports (Dashper, 2012). Further, women and men interact with animals in very similar ways (Herzog, 2007). Approximately the same proportions of males and females visit zoos, live with companion animals, and grieve at the loss of a pet (Herzog, 2007). The sexes have more similarities than differences in many areas of human-animal interaction (Herzog, 2007).

Equestrian sport is an ideal sport for sex integration because men have no biophysical advantage over women (Dashper, 2012). Success in equestrian sport is established through balance, specialized training, precision, and an elusive concept of "feel" (Daspher, 2012). Men excel in all forms of equestrian sport and tend to dominate in horseracing and show jumping (Cassidy, 2002; Hedenborg & Hedenborg White, 2012). For women, barriers for participation in equestrian sport are not explicit; females appear to have the same opportunities as males at all levels, but this does not ensure equal opportunity (Travers, 2008). Dashper (2012) argues that, at the top levels of the sport, women are denied opportunities in relation to their male competitors because of hidden barriers and discrimination that combine to produce a "glass ceiling" effect. Female equestrians are disadvantaged by the commonly held assumption that men are simply better riders (Norman, 2010). Men receive a "male advantage" from team selectors, owners, sponsors, and trainers (Dashper, 2012). The fact that there are fewer men in the sport actually helps men stand out and attract attention (Dashper, 2012). Male equestrians ride "the glass escalator" (Williams, 1995) and surpass equally competent female riders;

as a result, female riders lose confidence in their own abilities and thus intensify the male advantage (Dashper, 2012).

Men are generally more successful than women in professional equestrian pursuits; consequently women tend to take up the role of working in the stable. As Merlin (2004) explains, "the conflicts surrounding horse 'housework' resemble, in large part, the type of conflict created by gendered cultural labor which assigns women the task of backstage work in support of men's front stage performances" (pp. 16–17). Further, equestrian athletes tend to reach their career peaks later than competitors in other sports do. At the time when a female rider is coming into the height of her athletic career, she is also in her prime childbearing years (Daspher, 2012). Professional equestrians have longer careers than other athletes, which makes balancing competitive sport and family life more challenging. Travel and long stays away from home lead many female equestrians to self-select out of performance at the highest level of the sport (Dashper, 2012).

Plymoth (2012) explains that horseback riding is now seen as "girlish"; as a result. equestrian sport as a whole has been feminized. The relationship between a girl and a horse is seen to be about caring and emotion. Although equestrian sports are associated with girls, the stable and the culture within the stable is based on masculine traditions (Plymoth, 2012). Through riding and grooming, girls develop agency and skills that they can later use for empowerment (Forsberg & Tebelius, 2011; Ojanen, 2012; Pfister, 1993). This is evidence that a new discourse around the "horse girl" is emerging and that gender boundaries are being challenged by less traditional forms of femininity (Plymoth, 2012).

The horse stable is an important social space for girls (Nikku, 2005; Ojanen, 2012). The military history and masculine roots of equestrian sport have formed a horse environment that relies on competencies and skills like leadership, responsibility, and dedication (Forsberg & Tebelius, 2011). These skills can be applied for future careers, but not necessarily careers in equestrian sport (Plymoth, 2012). The horse girl who grows up engaged in the horse stable environment and learning these skills and competencies absorbs confidence and adopts a less traditional form of femininity (Plymoth, 2012). The horse girl learns both traditionally masculine qualities and traditionally feminine qualities. It is the stable culture that encourages both masculinity in terms of leadership and management and femininity in terms of caring—a femininity that is wider than that found elsewhere (Forsberg & Tebelius, 2011). Women involved in a horse stable experience improved confidence, a sense of community, and feelings of accomplishment through responsibilities (Forsberg and Tebelius, 2011). As Dashper (2012) explains, masculinity is still constructed in opposition to femininity; consequently the status of women in the sport is challenged. Even in a sport where both men and women compete against one another, the construction of masculinity by men continues to subordinate femininity (Wedgewood, 2003).

THEORY

In this paper I apply the theatrical insights of Pierre Bourdieu and Donna Haraway to explain how the horse stable figures in the horseback riding/equestrian sport experience in Canada. Bourdieu (1984) explains that participation in a particular sport depends on spare time, cultural capital, and, primarily, economic capital. Frequency of sport participation

increases with higher education; among participants who are more educated, withdrawal from sport decreases with age (Bourdieu, 1984). I apply Bourdieu's concept of cultural reproduction to demonstrate that although participants in equestrian sport now come from a wider variety of socioeconomic backgrounds, the stable as a cultural space has not changed significantly. Young girls who participate in the horse stable learn skills, competencies, and freedoms that are not acquired in other sports or other social spaces for youth. Through cultural reproduction, the values and norms of the horse stable have been sustained through generations. The values and norms of the 1934 horse stable (when the Pony Club was introduced to Canada) are consistent with those practiced in the horse stable today. Bourdieu (1984) explains that our positions within social spaces (such as the horse stable) are influenced by our social attributes (e.g., class and gender). As a more diverse range of social classes has come to occupy the horse stable, it is foreseeable that the norms and values of more than one social class will tend to influence the social space. However, through cultural reproduction, the traditional culture of the horse stable has been maintained. Through application of Haraway's concept of "naturecultures," I identify how the horse stable figures in the lives of young female equestrians.

Haraway (1991) explains that the binary division between nature and culture in western societies is ambiguous and irrelevant because what appears to be natural is actually embedded in our cultural consciousness. In naming and classifying things, we need to consider the human and nonhuman historical naturecultures that have led us to this identification (Haraway, 2008). In her address of Willem, the Great Pyrenees dog from California, she finds "a sharp reminder that anywhere one really looks actual living

wolves and dogs are waiting to guide humans into contested worldings" (Haraway, 2008, p. 39). I argue that although the horse has, as Haraway (2008) suggests with Willem, led humans into a world of various naturecultures, the human-horse relationship has developed social worlds for both species. The social world that I am interested in here is the horse stable, but equestrian competitions of various different kinds and racetracks are other sites at which the human-horse relationship has developed in different ways. The relationship between human and horse in the horse stable is not necessarily the same as the relationship between the two at an equestrian competition because the naturecultures that influence that social world are different. In the analysis section of this paper I outline and explore the dynamics of the horse stable and the naturecultures that influence it. But first I explain how I came to this program of research and my methodology.

METHODS

This program of research employs a mixed method approach using document analysis, media analysis, and interviews. Each method was used concurrently and as themes presented themselves they informed the analysis. Semistructured interviews were conducted with forty-three current or former equestrians. All interviewees were members of the Canadian Pony Club at some point during their youth. The Pony Club was introduced in Great Britain in 1929 as a youth horse sport organization aimed at encouraging interest and education in horsemanship and horseback riding (The Pony Club, 2013). In 1934, the first branch of the pony club was formed in Canada with permission from the British Pony Club (Canadian Pony Club, 2013). The Canadian Pony Club is a horse sport organization available for youth under twenty-one years of age.

Unlike other horse sport organizations that focus on one specific type of horseback riding, the Canadian Pony Club attempts to introduce young equestrians to a variety of different types of equestrian sport; however, most are types of "English" riding. There are now approximately 5,800 Canadian pony club members (Equine Canada, 2010), and this is widely seen as the most affordable way to participate in competitive youth equestrian sport in Canada. For the purposes of this study, the Canadian Pony Club was used as a means of recruiting interviewees who were presumably more likely to have a wider range of experiences in the equine industry than equestrians in other horse sport organizations. Interviewees were recruited using the Canadian Pony Club alumni database (Canadian Pony Club, 2013). This database is publicly accessible and holds the names and contact emails of hundreds of former pony clubbers. Each individual who is included in the database has consented to have his or her name and email published on the Internet and in many cases they have also provided a brief outline of their experiences in the Pony Club. Subsequent interviewees were recruited through participant referral and calls for participants posted in the Facebook groups of the Ontario region Canadian Pony Club chapters (Central Ontario Region; Western Ontario Region; St. Laurence, Ottawa Valley Region).

All interviewees were female, over eighteen years old, and lived in Ontario while participating in the Canadian Pony Club. Participants ranged in age from eighteen to seventy-three years old and were organized into categories based on age: under thirty years old (ten interviewees), thirty to fifty years old (twenty-one interviewees), and over fifty years old (twelve interviewees). Study participants were not asked to identify their

race or ethnicity. As a former Canadian pony clubber myself I had easy access to this population. I still occasionally volunteer with my former club when needed. I also have an understanding of "horse language"—the terms, slang, and expressions as well as the norms, values, and beliefs that are predominantly followed within the industry—or what some scholars have referred to as the unique cultural languages and practices that permeate equestrianism (Birke, 2007; Dashper, 2012). Although my past experiences in the Pony Club and my current participation in the equine industry may give me insights similar to those of a "complete member" (Adler & Adler, 1987), I may be hindered in my ability engage in unbiased analysis (Dashper, 2012). However, participants seemed to gain comfort from my insider status. When participants were attempting to explain something that a "nonhorse person" would not understand, they asked such questions as "Well you're a rider right?" or "Do you ride?" Being able to self identify as a horseback rider appeared to make participants more comfortable in their explanations.

Individuals were contacted by email, informed of the study, and asked to participate in it. Only those who wished to be involved in the study were pursued further. In about five or ten cases participants agreed to participate but, after receiving further information, withdrew or did not respond to subsequent emails. Interviews lasted between thirty-five and ninety minutes and were voice-recorded (with the permission of participants) and transcribed. The interviews were analyzed as part of a larger ethnographic study exploring the Canadian equine industry and interspecies relations in equestrian sport. Interviews were triangulated against document analysis of equine industry studies (Equine Canada, 2003, 2010) and media analysis of web versions of

equestrian sport magazines (e.g., *The Chronicle of the Horse; Horse Sport*), equestrian industry blogs (e.g., Horses and History throughout the Ages; Rookie—Horse Girls; Girls Horse Club), and equestrian industry websites (e.g., Equine Canada; Barnmice; Equestrian Connection; The Pony Club). Ten of the interviews were conducted face to face and thirty-three took place over the phone because of geographic and time restrictions. Field notes were taken during the ten in-person interviews and these were used to supplement the interviews, media analysis, and document analysis. Key themes emerged through the data analysis process; three of these are discussed in the analysis section of this paper: responsibility, empowerment and accomplishments, and escape.

ANALYSIS

For the purposes of this analysis the term *stable* is used to represent the space where individuals engage in horseback riding, including any fields, exercise areas, barns, arenas, or other buildings. This broad definition is intended to emphasize that a stable is more than just a physical structure. In developing a multidimensional view of equestrian spaces, Keaveney (2008) describes horse barns as chaotic, smelly, and dirty. The barn is a place to engage in activities (e.g., horseback riding) outside of everyday life (Keaveney, 2008). The barn provides a space where individuals can adopt new social roles and escape from their daily lives and responsibilities (Keaveney, 2008).

In this analysis I explore three themes that presented themselves in the data analysis. The first is that the stable is a place for learning responsibility. I discuss how the naturecultures of the stable make it a place where young equestrians can learn to be responsible horsepeople. Second, I outline how accomplishments and empowerment in

the horse stable allows young equestrians to develop a range of femininities. Tasks in the stable that are masculine and feminine allow for flexibility in identity formation. Finally, the stable is a place where youth can go to escape their daily life. The horses in the stable provide freedom and a means of stress relief. I explore how the naturecultures of the horse stable help young equestrians develop agency. Analysis of these three themes through an application of Haraways's natureculture and Bourdieu's understanding of cultural reproduction will build a stronger appreciation for how horse stables figure in equestrian sport in Canada.

RESPONSIBILITY

The horse stable is a public place that humans and horses visit regularly. Human patrons of the stable include individuals who keep their horses there or visit/exercise/maintain other people's horses, veterinarians and veterinarian technicians, blacksmiths and farriers, coaches and trainers, suppliers (such as suppliers of shavings, hay, and grain), and horse transporters. Horse patrons are less frequent unless the stable is used for competitions and horse training clinics, in which case horses might visit the property and barns that encompass the stable more often. Business, education, health care, and physical training all take place around the horse stable and contribute to its definition as a public space. The horse stable is also a home for animals (horses and others) and in some cases humans. It represents a private space for those who live there but also for those who experience it as such. The equestrian stable is a place to learn responsibility and leadership through acts of physical labor required to maintain the facilities and through the labor that is required to maintain the health and well-being of the animals that live

there. Experiencing the horse stable as a private space is experiencing the homelike tasks (e.g. cleaning, preparing meals) that are required within it in the comfort of a homelike atmosphere (i.e., relaxing and inviting). When asked "What do people learn from participating in horseback riding?" Ashlyn explained, "Responsibility would probably be a huge one, discipline, and I guess in terms of learning with animals it gives you a way to learn about empathy and emotions of something that isn't going to talk to you."

Learning responsibility around the horse stable is about learning how to care for horses and how to be a good worker. Applying Haraway's concept of natureculture, the horse is perceived to be a natural element of horseback riding. Scholars have discussed the how riders work to become one with a horse (Game, 2001) and to develop mutual connectivity between human and horse (Latimer & Birke, 2009). The individual has a responsibility to engage the horse in ways that allow it to be an active partner in the horse-human relationship. For example, the horse should be asked for permission to ride rather than being subjected to a command in the form of brute force or aggression. The stable is a site where nature and culture are inseparable, and the naturecultures of the stable help shape the beliefs and values of young equestrians. This is displayed through the young equestrians' appreciation, respect, and responsibility to their horse. The mutual reliance between horse and human is a reflection of the stable as a whole as nature and culture are interwoven to the horseback riding experience. As Sara states, "you know in any other sport you have to rely on yourself or teammate but here you're relying on an animal that can't tell you exactly what they want, you know it's this trusting relationship that you have to have."

The responsibility that young equestrians have for a horse is natural and cultural, they learn these responsibilities and feel them almost instinctively as they are bound to horses and the horse stable. Many of the respondents in this study talked about spending their childhood in the stable working with horses, maintaining the barn, and learning. They explain that although it was hard work, they appreciated it. Sandra says,

> It's such a dedication … it's hard work, like there is a lot of it that's not really fun. Like doing hay, brushing them, and cleaning tack. Like yeah, there's a lot of it and eventually you get to think of it as fun, because I used to love cleaning my tack and putting my horses to bed, but realistically it's work…. I remember I resented it sometimes because I was like, I can't go to the sleepover or party because I have to get up and do that, and at the time it was a pain, but in hindsight I'm so glad.

Responsibility and accountability were common themes throughout the interviews in this study. Interviewees discussed the horse stable as a place that they loved to go to and they enjoyed spending long days there. Any child can learn the feelings of responsibility that come with being around horses and being present in a stable on a regular basis. Skill development and learning is not dependent on horse ownership. Although horseback riding can be expensive and historically was reserved for elite and upper-class individuals, many of the respondents in this study worked in the industry to pay for their horse, lessons, or coaching. The responsibility that these interviewees gained through participation in the horse stable is, in part, a result of their lower socioeconomic backgrounds, which required them to do the majority of the horse care and stable

maintenance themselves. It is also a product of cultural reproduction, whereby the culture of the horse stable is that you take care of your own horse and you must know how to care and provide for your own horse independent of assistance from anyone else. When youth equestrian sport first became popular in the 1930s, the equine industry in Canada was very different. Horses were primarily kept at home on family farms, and although the individuals who rode were collectively more affluent than they are today, they did most of their own horse care because the horses resided at their homes. Today, with urbanization and the commodification of the equine industry, many people keep their horses at horse boarding facilities, and the cost of keeping a horse at these facilities can be high. Modern young equestrians often have to work to support their own interests, but it is through cultural reproduction of horse stable values and training that young equestrians feel competent enough to do so. As Kate says,

> I guess for a lot of people it offers a work ethic because for a lot of people you have to work in order to be able to afford it. So you know, you work in a barn to help pay for your board. You have to help feed them and you know you can't just call in sick or be late because you have to be there.

And Kendra outlines,

> I think it gives you a really good sense of responsibility, depending on how you approach it, it really gave me a good work ethic because I worked my whole time when I was riding to be able to do it. And when I got my first horse I was in high school and I worked for the board.

These experiences are common among respondents. Values of hard work and dedication to horses and the responsibilities of the horse stable have been reproduced through generations as well as across generations among equestrians who ride at the same stables and attend the same competitions. Through the stable experience, these equestrians learn to nurture and care for their horses; they gain physical strength and have an opportunity to build accomplishments. Although the experiences within the horse stable can be attributed in part to cultural reproduction, they are also a product of the naturecultures of the stable. One of these naturecultures is that the stable is a space where equestrians engage in tasks that are both masculine and feminine. In the next section of this chapter I explore how accomplishments and empowerment in the horse stable encourages young female equestrians to explore a range of femininities.

EMPOWERMENT AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Given the cultural understanding in Canada that almost all little girls love horses, the general public might assume that the girl who likes horses is hyperfeminine, meaning she wears makeup, has long hair, likes the color pink, and so on. However, the tasks required of a girl in a stable are both feminine (e.g., caring and nurturing) and masculine (e.g., physical labor), and among female horseback riders a considerable range of femininities are expressed. Interviewees suggest that within the horse stable there is a division between two types of horse girls distinguished primarily by social class. Julie explains,

> Well, I think that there is kind of two different breeds of horsey girl. To me you get the snobby ones, the snobby ones they come from money and all that, and then there's the people that just want to have fun. So there's

> fun and potentially win, and then there is snobby and I'm going to win. I feel like I'm like, I like to win but I'm going out there to have fun and I think it's funny when you beat those people that have all that money.

This indicates that the respondent feels there is a correlation between the type of horse girl and economic means. Being able to purchase a good-quality horse gives some riders an advantage over others, but those who have the means to buy better horses are perceived as being less committed to the sport and often more feminine because they do not have to work and get dirty to be able to ride. More than one younger participant in this study explained the sense of accomplishment they felt when they beat someone with "a more expensive horse." Senior participants, however, did not share in these experiences. Clair said, "It was really quite snooty when you look back on it, but that's the way the world was back then. Now everybody rides no matter what background you come from, but back then it was kind of a closed club."

Clair's remark suggests there has been a change in the equine industry in Canada. Where it was once a pursuit for those of wealth, it is now accessible to a wider range of socioeconomic backgrounds. However, the elitist history of the sport does shape experiences within the equine industry and the horse stable. Although the industry and equestrian sport may have become more accessible, there is still a tension that stems from cost and affordability within the sport. Sara explains,

> I'm very hooked on what I do but sometimes I still feel bitter because you know you look around and you think that person spent $100,000 on that horse and we are supposed to compete at the same level, but then the cool

> thing is that when I go out there and am competitive with those $100,000 horses then that's a cool feeling. So, as much as you're going, "I can't afford that import," you're going "well I can't afford the import but I kicked butt today."

The feeling of accomplishment for Sara is heightened by her belief that she is an underdog at the competitions she attends. From a young age equestrians become aware of cost and buying power in the sport. When Sara refers to "the import" she is talking about a horse that has been imported from Europe. In Canada, many (but not all) of the top hunter/jumper horses have been imported from Europe, or somewhere along their bloodline a horse was brought to Canada from Europe. Involvement in a sport with an obvious financial hierarchy can be discouraging for young equestrians, but the sport itself offers empowerment. Meaghan outlines, "It's totally empowering to be up there … little girls on horses, teenage girls on horses, it gives them a sense of empowerment to be able to sit up on a horse that is that big and that will do whatever they ask it to do." Experiences within the stable through riding and working to maintain the stable facilities can be empowering and offer young women opportunities for accomplishments. It might be learning how to jump their horse or learning how to make their horse back up; small and big accomplishments are possible. The horse stable allows for girls and women to be express themselves in ways that outside the stable might be perceived as masculine, but it also encourages them to embrace a more masculine identity by teaching them that they are capable of doing masculine tasks. By engaging in heavy lifting, spending long hours doing physical work, being "dirty" most of the time, they are less likely to portray a

hyperfeminine image. The work that takes place in the stable is what would stereotypically be identified as man's work. At equestrian competitions, however, appearance, hygiene, cleanliness, and apparel are important to success. Therefore at equestrian competitions the horseback rider supports a more feminine image. This image of the horseback rider neatly turned out in jodhpurs, tall boots, jacket, and helmet is generally the image society (as a whole) thinks of when they picture a horseback rider. The public perception of a horseback rider is more feminine than the horseback rider one might encounter on a daily basis in a stable. However, as demonstrated, these competitions allow for accomplishments that break class barriers. In the next section I will explore how the stable acts as a means of escape for young equestrians.

ESCAPE

The horse stable is a place where young females learn responsibility and feel empowered, but it is also an avenue for freedom. When interviewee's were asked what they liked about horseback riding or what kept them in the sport, they spoke of relaxation, escape, or feelings of freedom. As Pat explains,

> the peacefulness, like I used to hack out when I was in high school and things were going bad. I would get on one of the horses we had and she was just the calmest thing ever, and you could just ride. I would go ride for two or three hours and just think and it would solve the problems of the world.

Pat's use of the term *hack out* refers to going for a mounted walk on her horse around a field, in a forest, or in a natural setting of some kind. Here participating in an act that she

believes to be more natural than performative brings about the feeling of escape. In order to establish this feeling of escape, the young equestrian has to have previously established feelings of control and trust with her horse. Learning to trust a horse is important to feeling a sense of freedom, but also being on a horse provides a distraction from stressful life events. In the stable cultural tasks such as grooming a horse, cleaning out horse stalls, and sweeping the barn isle act as distractions from everyday life. The horse acts as social support—a friend and confidante. Through the relationship with the horse and the necessary responsibilities of the stable, feelings of escape and freedom can be achieved. Lindsey explains how the act of riding helps her to destress:

> I found it a nice stress reliever, if you have anything going wrong in your day it's nice to get on because you can't be dwelling on all other things. Like if you go for a run for instance you can still be thinking about everything in your head but when your horse is under you and it's a thinking animal you have to concentrate more. So, I found it a big stress relief because it takes you away from everything.

Some interviewees shared how going for a ride outside in an open space was a unique and treasured experience. As Corinne explains, "even in university when I was really stressed out, like [my sister] had a horse and I would come home some weekends and just go ride. There's nothing like going galloping through a field … there is no better stress relief." Corinne illustrates the natureculture of the stable as relaxed and flexible, a place used to escape social institutions like the university. Horseback riding's effect on mitigating and relieving stress was identified by many interviewees in this study. The experience of

stress relief was consistently tied to being in nature with a horse. The equine partner represents a means of becoming more connected to nature, and when individuals become more connected to a natural state, they express feelings of escape, relaxation, and freedom. As Game (2001) identifies, whether or not horse lovers have felt the exhilaration of riding along a beach and splashing through the waves of the ocean, they will dream about it because "they know it already, in an eternal realm" (p. 2).

Being with an equine companion and exploring a natural setting brings about feelings of naturalness. Haraway (2008) explains that nature and culture cannot be experienced independent of one another because you cannot have nature without culture or culture without nature. The stable is influenced by both culture and nature. Our society has domesticated horses, taught them to live in barns, wear tack and blankets, be ride-able, have their feet trimmed, and wear horseshoes. Through this process we have developed the sociocultural activity of horseback riding. There are also, conceivably, elements of horseback riding that are natural: the horse and fields and forests used for riding outside. The challenge, as Haraway (2008) suggests, is that neither the stable (as a cultural element of horseback riding) nor the horse (as a natural element of horseback riding) is entirely cultural or natural. The stable is in part natural because it works like a living organism; the rhythm of stable life can be offset by changes in the balance of the daily routine. The horse is in part cultural because it is domesticated. Therefore the freedom and escape that are felt through horseback riding may also be a product of cultural reproduction whereby those that engage in horseback riding have learnt to experience this freedom by establishing trust with their horse. Someone unfamiliar with

horses could not achieve this feeling of freedom without first learning the naturecultures of the horse stable.

CONCLUSION

The horse stable is a unique social space. It gives young female equestrians the opportunity to get dirty, engage in physical labor, and develop a range of femininities. Young equestrians have an opportunity to build achievements and be empowered. They learn responsibility and are privy to experiences of freedom. The natureculture of the horse stable is characterized by masculine tasks (fixing fences, moving heavy hay bales, shoveling) and feminine tasks (cleaning buckets, cleaning the horse, caring for the horse). It is a space that is arguably less exclusive than it appears to the general public. However, in this chapter I have focused a form of youth equestrian sport that is presumably one of the most affordable, but other forms of equestrian sport (i.e., the "A" circuit) require significantly higher financial investments in order to participate, and it would be interesting to see how the horse stable experiences of these youth are similar to or different from the experiences I have presented here. This analysis of the horse stable is reflective of the experiences of members of the Canadian Pony Club across a time period of over fifty years; however, it does not necessarily reflect Canadian horse stable experiences of those not involved in the Canadian Pony Club in Ontario, Canada.

Further, although I present the horse stable and the equestrian sport experience as generally positive, women do face discrimination in attempting to transition from amateur levels of the sport into professional circuits (Dashper, 2012; Gilbert & Gillett, 2012; Hedenborg & Hedenborg White, 2012). I believe that there is still value in the horse

stable/equestrian sport experience. The horse stable and amateur equestrian sport can be valuable to identity formation, self-actualization, and feelings of self-competency. The naturecultures of the horse stable reinforce a work ethic of responsibility and reward its participants through opportunities and freedoms. Young female equestrians are empowered and afforded agency (Nikku, 2005; Ojanen, 2012) through their participation in the horse stable in Ontario, Canada. Future research would benefit from a more detailed exploration of how young equestrians become involved in the equine industry, as no clear trajectory for involvement was evident in this study. Further, international comparisons of equine industries and the social worlds within the equine industry would benefit from an evaluation of different types of horse stable experiences.

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PAPER 2:
TRUST IN EQUESTRIAN SPORT

This paper is currently 'in print' with the *Sociology of Sport Journal* as part of a special issue on animals and sport, edited by Dr. Kevin Young. It is included here in its published form with permissions from the *Sociology of Sport Journal*. The paper examines the human-horse relationship, the relationship the rider has with the equestrian community, and how trust figures in equestrian sport. The paper outlines how scholars have examined the concept of interactional trust in equestrian sport (see Wipper, 2000) but in competitive youth equestrian sport the rider must also trust the social system within which they are participating. Combining Mead's (1934) concept of interactional trust and Luhmann's (1988) notion of social system trust, this paper offers a unique way of conceptualizing trust, human-animal relations, and competitive youth equestrian sport.

One limitation of the paper is that length restrictions placed on the original published version did not allow for a full development of the future directions that I begin to outline in the conclusion. In the conclusion, I suggest that future researchers should examine how current social, economic, and cultural conditions may influence equestrian sport. For instance, in 2014 in North America and Europe there have been a number of horseback riders who have died because of accidents while riding, some of which were well-known professionals in the sport. It would be interesting and potentially helpful for equine industry groups to know how horseback riding related deaths are framed by the media, and how these deaths influence (if at all) the trust equestrians have in the horse community. It is possible that these deaths are being framed as "freak accidents," in which case they may not influence the equestrian community. However, if these

incidents are framed as an indication of the risk and danger that is involved in equestrian sport, and as misfortunes which could happen to anyone, even a professional, then this might have more of an impact on feelings of safety within equestrian sport.

This thesis draws on the experiences of current or former Pony Club members who are encouraged to be actively engaged in caring for their horse and maintaining the stable. However, not all equestrians are equally involved in caring, tacking up, and maintaining of their horse as were the respondents in this study. Some equestrians pay people to care for their horses and only come in contact with the horse when they are riding them. Scholars should explore whether social system trust might play a larger role in the establishment of interspecies trust when an equestrian spends less time caring and maintaining their horse. Is it possible that a strong social system trust helps to offset a weaker interactional trust and vice versa? Regardless, I would suggest that both interactional trust and social system trust, to varying degrees, are necessary for involvement in equestrian sport. Thus, interspecies trust is important to participation in equestrian sport. What is now needed is research on how equestrians from various countries and cultural contexts develop trust in equestrian sport and horses. This is one particular area of equine studies that would benefit from further research.

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The average participant in the Canadian equine industry has been riding or driving for over ten years (Equine Canada, 2010), and many individuals currently involved in the equine industry have had a lasting relationship with horse sport throughout their lives (Gilbert, 2013). The Canadian equine industry is a community. Participants stay involved for long periods of time and form social and professional networks. Equestrianism is a sport encompassing a diverse range of events and activities such as dressage, pony club, mounted games, eventing, polo, steeplechase, horse racing and carriage diving (Kay, 2008; Gilbert, 2013). Helmer (1991) argues that the horse is the center of a cultural system. Involvement in community organizations fosters heightened levels of trust (Putnam, 1993, 2000; Brown, Hoye & Nicholson, 2012). Membership in sport is a significant predictor of trust (Brown, Hoye & Nicholson, 2012). In this paper I explore interspecies trust and specifically how young girls develop trust in their equines for the purposes of competitive equestrian sport. I argue that interspecies trust manifests in two ways: first, through interactional trust, a form of trust that is built through joint action and results in symbolic interaction; second, through system trust, a form of trust that is developed through communication in an effort to reduce complexity and uncertainty in society.

To demonstrate interactional trust as it develops between a young female equestrian and her horse I apply George Herbert Mead's (1934) work, while rejecting his

claim that animals are incapable of having true selves because they lack cognitive abilities. Scholars (Arluke & Sanders, 1996; Myers, 2003) have argued against this claim and illustrating that animals are capable of symbolic interaction is not my objective in this paper. I apply Mead's (1934) theory as a means of outlining interactional trust in the context of interspecies relations and argue that although this form of trust is sufficient for recreational horseback riding, in competitive equestrian sport, system trust is also required. To demonstrate the necessity of system trust for the pursuit of competitive equestrian sport I draw on the work of Niklas Luhmann. I argue that competitive youth equestrian sport is a social system built around a community. In order to engage in competitive equestrian sport young equestrians must establish interactional trust with their horse and system trust by learning to trust the community and social system within which they are competing. Without system trust individuals are compelled to withdraw from competitive equestrian sport. This illustrates that interspecies trust is multidimensional and the equine community in Canada is, in part, responsible for the generation of interspecies trust.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature on interspecies relationships has gained momentum over the last fifteen years. Academic contributions in this broad area of study have included research on animals in sport (Sheard, 1999; Gillespie, Leffler & Lerner, 2002; Gilbert & Gillett, 2012;), the impact of animals on human health (Garrity & Stallones, 1998; Wells, 2009), therapeutic uses of animals (Burgon, 2003; Kaiser, Smith, Heleski and Spence, 2006; Yorke, Adams & Coady, 2008; Dell, Chalmers, Bresette, Swain & Rankin, 2011), animal ethics and

violence towards animals (Worden & Darden, 1992; Atkinson & Young, 2005), and human-animal relationships (Robins, Sanders, Clinton & Spencer, 1991; Lagoni, Butler & Hetts, 1994; Brandt, 2004; Sanders, 2007; Jerolmack, 2008; Herzog, 2011). Two areas of research within the study of interspecies relationships are important to this paper -- studies of equestrian sport and post-Mead studies of animals. In this section I highlight the contributions scholars have made in these areas of study and identify how they inform the analysis I undertake in this paper.

POST-MEAD ANIMALS

George Herbert Mead is one of the most notable scholars in the field of symbolic interactionism. His contributions are still used today as the principle guidelines within the perspective. Mead (1934) believed that one of the distinguishing characteristics of symbolic interactionism is that there is line between human and non-human animals (Algar & Algar, 1997; Sanders, 2005). This line is represented by language, which has allowed humans but not animals to engage in intersubjectivity, or the use of the conscious mind. Scholars (Arluke & Sanders, 1996; Myers, 2003) have disputed Mead's claim that animals are incapable of symbolic interaction.

Myers (2003) explains that intersubjective understanding across species is possible and the requirements for language-use are not distinctly human. Systems with linguistic properties have been documented in a variety of different species (Myers, 2003). Arluke and Sanders (1996) explain that the difference between animal and human abilities "is a matter of degree rather than kind"(p.53). Hanson (1986) argues that the development of the self can be better explained through an analysis of imagination. She

says that Mead's (1934) requirement of the "whole" self led to the dismissal of pretend play as a developmental part of attaining a sense of self that is reflective (Hanson, 1986). Unlike Mead, Hanson (1986) argues that to play the part of the other requires the individual to be able to discern between the self and other. A child in the process of pretending to be the other has achieved a reflective sense of self (Myers, 2003). Through developing an understanding of how the self is generated we can discern and identify the meaning of other species' behaviours. We can also identify how our own selves are influenced by relationships with other species (Myers, 2003). Griffin (1992) explains that our acknowledgement of animals' ability to engage in symbolic communication has shown that humans are less unique then previously supposed.

Alger and Alger (1997) argue that symbolic interactionism aids animals in survival and is present throughout the animal kingdom. Individuals with canine companions believe that their interactions with their pets are meaningful and they claim to develop reciprocal relationships with their animals (Sanders, 1993). Cat owners explain that their feline companions display reciprocity and empathy in their relationships, and they are highly individual-minded (Alger & Alger, 1997). Collins (1989) presented 'natural interaction rituals' as a mechanism for symbolic interactionism. Sanders' (1993) demonstrated these routines in his dog owners, who treated their dogs as family members and formed family schedules that included their dogs. Sanders (1993) believed that it is the "emotional" connection between human and dog combined with Collins' (1989) natural interaction rituals that facilitate symbolic interactionism. Pet owners also identified their animal companion's ability to define situations as important to engaging

in symbolic interaction (Alger & Alger, 1997). Sanders (2005) explains, it is "entirely sensible for me to see my dogs' actions as demonstrating a clear definition of the situation" (p.234). He outlines that animals are capable of understanding that they can act in ways that will then affect our actions as humans (Sanders, 2007). Animals are also capable of devising plans of action that they then use in a directed manner to achieve an intended outcome (Sanders, 2007). These are processes of "doing mind" which challenge the centrality of language (Sanders, 1993; Dutton and William, 2004; Sanders, 2007).

As a result of interaction, Terrace (1987) identifies the "wordless mind", and Sanders (2005) explains that both human and animals are able to engage in the process through which it develops, a process Blumer (1969) refers to as 'joint action'. Through interaction and in the context of relationships, the self is presented (Sanders, 2005). Drawing on his work with dogs, Sanders (2005) explains that his dogs have a sense of time and can recognize when their actions shape the response they want to elicit from him. I present this discussion of animal selves as a platform from which I engage my discussion of interactional trust. Following from Mead (1934) I argue that in order to engage in interactional trust an individual must believe that their counterpart is capable of reflective thinking. The rider must trust that the horse will take his or her best interests into account before they act and vice versa. The horse must be capable of defining the situation in order to keep the rider safe. Horse and rider must be capable of working together in a joint action in order to make equestrian sport possible.

EQUESTRIAN SPORT

A previously small literature on equestrian sport has expanded significantly in recent years and now includes studies of gender relations (Eichberg, 1995; Nikku, 2005; Hedenborg & Hedenborg White, 2012; Dashper, 2012; Plymoth, 2012), history and historical evolutions (Riedi, 2006), human-horse relationships (Game, 2001, Brandt, 2004; Birke and Brandt, 2009), sports law and equestrian sport (Herlin-Karnell, 2013), race and ethnicity (Knijnik, 2013), equestrian fiction literature (Singleton, 2013), and discipline specific studies such as eventing (Wipper, 2000), polo (Gilbert & Gillett, 2013), bullfighting (Thompson, 2013), natural horsemanship (Birke, 2007), dressage (Dashper, 2012b), showjumping (Coulter, 2013, 2014), rodeo (Adelman & Becker, 2013), horseracing (Helmer, 1991; Cassidy, 2002; Butler, 2013) and pony club (Gilbert, 2013).

The horse was once predominantly a form of functional livestock (Gilbert & Gillett, 2012, 2013), now horses are principally used in the 'entertainment/leisure sectors' of the Canadian economy (Equine Canada, 2010; Gilbert, 2013). As Gilbert and Gillett (2012) explain, horse breeding in Canada has reflected this shift developing the new 'equine athlete'. Canadian horse breeders are placing more value on athleticism than bloodlines (Gilbert & Gillett, 2012). There are currently over 900,000 horses living in Canada and approximately 885,000 people active in the Canadian Equine Industry (Equine Canada, 2010; Gilbert, 2013). Dashper (2012) explains, in United Kingdom the equine industry is still perceived to be marginal and elitist, but 4.3 million people in Britain ride horses on a regular basis (British Equestrian Trade Association, 2009; Dashper, 2012; Gilbert, 2013). Hedenborg and Hedenborg White (2012) argue that to

understand equestrian sport it is important to consider how people participate in the sport and the different ways it is represented across countries. Equestrian sport in Canada has come to represent the interests of middle to upper middle class individuals (Gilbert, 2013). According to Equine Canada (2010) the most common Canadian Equestrian has a median annual income of $60,000 to $80,000. These individuals are frequently between the ages of 50-59 years old and female (Gilbert, 2013).

Interest in the human-horse relationship (Wipper, 2000; Game, 2001; Birke, 2008) is a growing area of study. Studies of Natural Horsemanship (NH) have explored new ways of working and communicating with horses (Birke, 2007). The horse is a unique form of companion; their perceived allusiveness makes them appear tamable, yet wild (Birke, 2008; Gilbert, 2013). Through training humans and horses form intimate connections (Game, 2001). The relationship between horse and rider allows the pair to complete complex tasks together and maintains their safety while doing so (Wipper, 2000). Stables allow for training and encourage the horse-human relationship by emphasizing the dependency of horses on humans (Game, 2001). Wipper (2000) identified the need for trust, mutual respect, confidence, and close communication between horse and rider in the equestrian sport eventing. Her study outlined the process of building a partnership with a horse for the purposes of equestrian sport. She argues that the relationship and trust between horse and rider is fragile and, if not attended to, can be easily broken (Wipper, 2000; Gilbert, 2013). In the analysis section of this paper I build on Wipper's (2000) work and the literature that has been presented here to develop a

more detailed understanding of trust between horse and rider in the context of competitive youth equestrian sport.

THEORY

In this paper I draw on the work of Luhmann (1979) and Mead (1934). The increasing complexity of modern society led Luhmann (1979) to the understanding that trust is system-based and presentational (Weber, 2011). This results in the development of trust in certain people and a distancing of interpersonal trust (Weber, 2011). Following a symbolic interactionist perspective Mead (1934) explained that trust becomes possible when we develop the ability to take another individual's perspective (Weber & Carter, 1998). This is achieved, according to Mead (1934), through the cognitive ability of role-taking. Trust is accomplished when one individual believes that the other is taking their point of view into account and will respect their relationship through the decision making process (Weber & Carter, 1998). This is trust as a moral construct because it is used to reinforce the moral standards of the relationship (Weber & Carter, 1998). I argue that both Luhmann and Mead's work on trust is important to understanding interspecies trust. The theoretical insights presented here allow for a more innovative understanding of trust and advances the current literature on interspecies relations.

SOCIAL SYSTEMS TRUST

Luhmann (1988) argues that trust is used to reduce or reconstruct the increasing complexity of society. Trust is an acknowledgement of risk (Weber & Carter, 1998); the risk society challenges us and motivates us to trust (Jalava, 2003). It is uncertainty and complexity that develop the conditions through which trust grows (Luhman, 1979). Once

trust is established action and experiences emerge but are controlled by the structure of the social system within which trust is present. Like control, trust reduces complexity (Jalava, 2003). Risk motivates us to develop and consider alternative modes of conduct (Weber & Carter, 1998). Trust is a solution to problems of risk (Luhmann, 1988). Luhmann (1988) distinguishes between confidence and trust. He outlines that confidence is easier to acquire than trust. This is because there are fewer unfamiliar acts that test the situation of confidence (Jalava, 2003). Confidence influences an individual's ability to trust or their willingness to accept and enact trust (Jalava, 2003). Luhmann (1988) argues that communication is indirectly influenced, because confidence is a product of our thoughts and affects our thoughts. Modern society is only controllable through trust (Jalava, 2003).

For Luhmann (1992) human beings are an environmental part of social systems, they are organizational and physical entities (Jalava, 2003). Human beings are not restrained by structures, norms and social roles because social systems are a composition of communicative processes (Jalava, 2003). Therefore, for Luhmann (1992) human beings are psychic or personal systems and communication is social systems (Jalava, 2003). Communication is based on expectations of others reactions. Individuals do not draw upon commonly accepted values because they are generally indifferent (Jalava, 2003). In Luhmann's view understanding trust is about understanding society. In order to be prepared for forthcoming changes in modern society we need to deploy trust (Jalava, 2003).

In Luhmann's social systems theory he identifies that trust differs in psychic and social systems (Jalava, 2003). He explains that this because they are capable of creating trust within their own human or communication system. As Jalava (2003) explains,

> "In Luhmann's theory there are two different observers. One is the ego, or egos, that is, conscious (physical) systems. The other type of observer is social systems. These systems observe via communication, while conscious systems observe via cognition. What happens, either through a cognitive act or a communicative event, is that something, through a distinction, is the centre of either cognitive or communicative attention (Luhmann, 1992: 98; Arnoldi, 2001: 5)" (Jalava, 2003, p. 182).

As Jalava (2003) illustrates, Luhmann (1992) argues for trust as a communicative medium closely tied to social systems. He fails to distinguish the place of trust in psychic systems. He argues that trust based on values and norms alone will not succeed in modern society (Jalava, 2003). Furthering, Luhmann's work I demonstrate how a combination of communicatory trust and Mead's role-talking trust are social and psychic systems that are both important to our understanding of trust. Applying these theories to the retrospective experiences of female youth equestrians, I illustrate how both social system trust and interactional trust are important to success in equestrian sport. I outline how this understanding of trust may be used to develop more distinct analysis of other forms of interspecies cooperation and trust development.

INTERACTIONAL TRUST

In the literature review I outlined Mead's view of animals, as he continuously makes a strong distinction between animals and humans stating that animals are incapable of symbolic interaction (Algar and Algar, 1997). Here I briefly highlight how Mead's work is useful in understanding the human-horse relationship and interspecies trust.

Mead (1934) explains that when an individual takes the role of the other, he or she is then able to be reflective of his or her own role in the situation and control his or her own communication from this reflective state. In an established horse and rider partnership each partner will consider the other partners role in the situation and adapt their own role to meet the needs of the situation. In completing a jumping course, the rider will consider the horse's ability to jump, turn and their sensitivity to particular objects and will adapt their riding style based on the performance of their horse. The horse will consider the rider's abilities and adjust their rhythm, gait and jumping style based on the rider. A horse with a less experienced rider may refuse to jump if they think the rider is not balanced and at risk of falling off. It is not a mere reaction to a gesture it is an action towards advancing a cooperative activity (Mead, 1934). The horse and rider have a common goal -- for example, completing the jumping course, and work together to achieve the intended outcome. This is a process of role-taking which is made possible by the control that the individual has over their own response. Mead (1934) outlines that in the human group this reflective control over individual response allows for the mutual activity. He credits social control, as manifested through self-criticism, with the ability to manipulate individual actions because the behavior that is controlled through self-

criticism is being controlled socially (Mead, 1934). Horse and rider want to do well, they want to be successful and they want to accomplish new tasks. They both have an interest in learning and through the process of learning new skills together they develop their relationship. Role taking and the development of a self-conscious community is established through an appreciation for 'the generalized other' (Mead, 1934). This process is what allows for trust development between horse and rider. Trust is built as the human-horse relationship develops but can be destroyed if either partner disrespects the relationship.

METHODS

This program of research employs a mixed method approach using document analysis, media analysis and interviews. Forty-three semi-structured interviews were conducted with current or former Canadian Pony Club members. Interviews were conducted over the phone (thirty-three interviews) and in person (ten interviews) when geographic and time restrictions allowed. The interviews lasted between 35 to 90 minutes in length. In-person interviews were conducted at the convenience of the respondent on family farms, in their homes and in restaurants. Field notes were taken during in-person interviews and this data was used to supplement the interview data. All interviewees are female, over eighteen years old and current or former equestrians. Participants were not asked to identify race, ethnicity or sexual orientation. All interviewees participated in the Canadian Pony Club in Ontario during their youth. Respondents' length of participation in the pony club ranged from two years to over ten years. Interviewees ranged in age from 18 to 73

years old and were grouped into age categories of: under 30 years old (11 interviewees), 30 to 50 years old (20 interviewees), and over 50 years old (12 interviewees).

Initial participants were recruited using the alumni database accessible through the home page of the Canadian Pony Club website (Canadian Pony Club, 2013). This is a publicly accessible list that includes the names and contact emails of hundreds of former Canadian Pony Club members. Everyone listed on the site has consented to have their information publicly published and in many cases they have also shared a brief reflection about their time in pony club. The list was sorted for individuals who participated in pony club in Ontario. Potential interviewees were contacted through email and informed of the study. If they expressed interest they were then provided information and consent for the study. At the end of each interview participants were asked to provide the name and contacts of friends or family who may also be candidates for the study. This solicitation provided participants through snowball sampling. Finally, calls for participants posted in relevant social networking groups provided additional interviewees (Facebook groups of Ontario region Canadian Pony Club chapters). Interview data was used concurrently and themes were explored as they developed. This data was then triangulated with media data analysis of web-versions of equestrian sport magazines (e.g. The Chronicle of the Horse, Horse Sport), equestrian industry blogs (e.g. Horses and History Throughout the Ages, Rookie – Horse Girls, Girls Horse Club Blog), and equestrian industry websites (e.g. Equine Canada, Barnmice, Equestrian Connection, The Pony Club) and equine industry studies (Equine Canada, 2003, 2010).

The Canadian Pony Club was formed in 1934 by members of the Eglinton Hunt Club in Toronto, Ontario whom had learned about the Pony Club in England through their military associates and wanted to encourage young people to become interested in riding (Canadian Pony Club, 2013)[6]. The Canadian Pony Club is a youth horse sport organization for young equestrians under 21 years old. Pony club members participate in a variety of different equestrian activities that allow them to learn about riding and horsemanship. In Canada, the pony club is widely seen to be one of the more affordable ways to participate in youth equestrian sport (Gilbert, 2013). In 2010, there were approximately 5,800 pony club members across Canada (Equine Canada, 2010; Gilbert, 2013). As a former pony club member I had easy access to this population. My insider status appeared to bring comfort to my interviewees. They would ask such things as: "do you ride?" or "well, you're a rider right?". I also have an understanding of the language and values of the equestrian industry in Canada. Birke (2007) and Dashper (2012) have referred to this as the "unique cultural languages and practices that permeate equestrianism". My position within the equine industry may hinder my ability to engage in unbiased analysis but it also facilitated access to this population.

ANALYSIS

Wipper (2000) suggests that interactional trust between horse and rider, which she refers to as mutual trust and confidence, is essential to establishing a partnership (Wipper, 2000). I argue that in order to compete in equestrian competitions (in this case youth equestrian sport competitions) interactional trust is not enough, a combination of

[6] The first pony club was founded in England in 1929 (The Pony Club, 2013).

interactional trust between horse and rider and social system trust in the equestrian community must be established.

In this section, I outline how interspecies trust is a product of interactional trust and social system trust. First, interactional trust is built through the establishment of a human-horse relationship. Equine industry media and industry studies, and the participants in this study suggest that interactional trust is made possible through: 1) a connection or bond between horse and human, and 2) a human-horse partnership. System trust is created through, 1) establishing goals, 2) training for competition, and 3) receiving support from a network of social systems.

THE HORSE-HUMAN RELATIONSHIP

Trust in the human-horse relationship is built through accomplishments achieved by joint action. Unlike social system trust, interactional trust is built between individuals (in this case human and horse). It is a developmental process that can be established over varying lengths of time and it can be easily broken (Wipper, 2000). The difference between social system trust and interactional trust is that interactional trust does not require the pursuit of competitive goals. For example, a trail rider who takes pleasure in riding the same trails on a regular basis can still develop trust in their horse. Their trust is built through joint action but it is not necessitated by competition.

ESTABLISHING A CONNECTION. Building a connection between horse and rider is often described as a physical and emotional experience. In establishing a connection the rider seeks to 'become one' with the horse. Game (2001) explains that when horse and rider move freely together there are moments of effortless floating. She

refers to this mutual interconnection as the 'centaur effect' (Game, 2001). Hansen (2013) explains that the experience of one's body is shaped psychically and physically through riding. However, we should also ask how riding emotionally and physically shapes the horse's experience of self (Hansen, 2013). Equestrians in this study demonstrate that they believe that their horses are reflective and have cognitive abilities. One individual explained that she wanted her equine companion to have positive feelings towards her. She said, "If you just show up and expect to ride them and have them like you, I think you're wrong. That's why I will ride [Lady] so much, because I want her to like me" (Lynn, 2012). There is an intimate relationship between this horse and rider; the rider's concern for the horses' opinion of her illustrates the role of the horse as an active participant in the interaction. These horse owners are similar to Sander's (2007) dog owners who believe that their interactions with their pets are meaningful and reciprocal.

Equestrians, young and old, dream about riding a horse in an elevated state of consciousness. Game (2001) explains that whether or not horse-lovers have actually ridden a horse along a beach, they "will tell you of dreaming of riding along the beach, galloping, as close to the waves as possible" (p.2). In youth equestrian blogs, horse-lovers share poetry and experiences with like-minded peers. The poem titled "Two Hearts One Mind" written by a youth equestrian illustrates feelings of flight, dance, and reflection that are achieved through the human-horse relationship (Horse Girls Blog, 2013).

In youth equestrian sport the relationship between horse and rider may also be built on emotional support. The horse can act as a confidant and friend to youth equestrians. One respondent outlined, "I have a lot of students who are teenage girls and

part of their relationship with their horse is having something to confide in and have a real personal connection with" (Wendy, 2012). In this remark the respondent highlights that a rider's relationship with a horse is complex. The horse is not only a means of competing in equestrian sport; they are also youth social support mechanism.

As Wipper (2000) explains, horse people view their horses as mindful creatures that are capable of being dumb and smart, making bad and good decisions. Humans and horses working as a team, must "understand each other's signals"(Wipper, 2000: p. 58). In an optimal relationship, humans understand the horse's signals and the horse understands the human's signals (Wipper, 2000). An equestrian blogger explained,

> "Whenever my horse does not obey me I consistently blame myself, either my aid was wrong or I did not hear the horse telling me something was wrong… I have found that it is THIS type of consistency that earns me a horse's trust. And when I mess up the horses are more willing to forgive my faults." (Cochran, 2011).

This individual outlines her responsibility to her horses and the autonomy of her horses when they are willing to forgive her. This suggests that establishing a connection with a horse may encourage the growth of a human-horse partnership.

DEVELOPING A PARTNERSHIP. When participants were asked to explain how their relationship with their horse differed from the relationships they have with other animals such as a dog or a cat they emphasized that the horse was a partner. As Diana (2012) explains, "it's a partnership and each one has a role, each partner the human partner and the horse partner each one has a role". Some individuals explained that if they

did something with their dog like agility or herding then the relationship may be similar. Through the development of the partnership interactional trust forms, one participant said,

> "We trust each other to be safe, like I've got to trust him and he has got to trust me, that I'm going to take him to right place in the forest and not let the bogeyman come out of the trees and get him, you know they get like that" (Meaghan, 2012).

Considering the partner's role in the situation and adapting their roles to meet the needs of the situation is a fundamental element of interactional trust in the horse-human relationship.

None of the interviewee's in this study expressed concern over the way in which they were describing their equine companions. Many used terms, descriptions and illustrations that might be considered anthropomorphic. However, they were confident and consistently cited examples of how their horses engaged in meaningful interaction. One respondent explained, "I find that it is two way communication. I think they, a lot of horses, want the relationship as much as the people want the relationship"(Danielle, 2012). This suggests that animals are able to define situations and act in ways that initiate joint action. The perception that horses are capable of two way communication allows individuals to trust them. One interviewee said,

> "all their personalities are different right, so you definitely have different relationships with them. My current pony she is not very work orientated, but you know with her I can go out in the field and just sit on her and I can tell that she is perfectly content and I'm happy being there too, and I mean I trust that pony with

> my life. I know she would never do anything intentional to hurt anybody" (Sandy, 2012).

The acknowledgement of personalities was a consistent theme across the interviews. Respondents explained that each horse is different and many held stereotypes for mares (female horses), geldings (castrated males), and stallions (intact males). Understanding how riders identify with their horses is important to understanding interspecies trust. The participants in this study conceive of their horses as reflective, cognitive and engaged actors. This is consistent with the equestrian media where horses are portrayed as sentient beings and frequently anthropomorphized. Joint action, though not necessarily in competitive pursuits, is important to developing interactional trust between humans and horses. Shared experiences allow youth equestrians to build trust in their horses. However, in order to engage in competitive youth equestrian sport riders must also have trust in the equestrian community within which they compete.

YOUTH EQUESTRIAN SPORT AS A SOCIAL SYSTEM

System trust begins with horse breeders in the Canadian equestrian industry and includes anyone actively involved in the equine community. It is based on the assumption that all individuals involved in the community share a common interest in keeping the sport safe and enjoyable. The equestrian community plays an important role in encouraging interspecies trust between human and horse.

ESTABLISHING GOALS. Each equine partner has a purpose, and new depth is given to the human-horse relationship as young equestrians set and accomplish competitive goals. In horse industry blogs this concept is referred to as the 'lessons your

horse teaches you' (Barnmice, 2013). One blog asked readers, "Isn't it fun when your horse 'gets' something for the first time? You get excited and praise them profusely. You eagerly, yet *patiently*, anticipate the next time they give you that same new response" (Redfield, 2012). Relationships are formed with new horses as youth move through the system of equine sport. A young equestrian often has multiple mounts throughout their childhood and adolescence. This is typically because they physically outgrow their ponies/horses and need to move to a larger mount, or their horse/pony reaches its athletic limit and a new mount is needed in order to advance in the discipline.

Trust in competitive youth equestrian sport as a community and social system aids in the transition between horses and in the development of the rider. The young rider can trust that members of the equestrian community will not attempt to put them in a dangerous situation. The advice and expertise of coaches, trainers, horse breeders, stable managers, and horse show organizers in the equestrian industry helps mitigate risk. The nature of the social system is exhibited through a procedural advancement or a continuation of gained accomplishments. Having the opportunity to strive for professional status or Olympic level competition encourages trust in the social system. Formal recognition of individuals who have successfully progressed to professional and Olympic levels is motivation for young equestrians. Ainsley explains, "I probably would have really aspired to be an Olympic show jumper because I loved it, I love jumping" (2012). Being actively involved in the equestrian community helps to encourage goal setting and competitive pursuits. The rider must have trust in their relationship with their horse but also trust in the equestrian sport system through which they are progressing. System trust

reflects the trust that they have in their trainers, coaches, judges and clinicians, and even potentially trust in the individual they purchased or leased their horse from.

TRAINING FOR COMPETITION. Trust is established through training for competition. Training reduces complexity and risk. As one equestrian blog explained, "For most of us riding is easier if we have a coach or instructor to support and help us. It is always good to have another set of eyes on the ground and someone to offer encouragement to help us get over the emotional bumps" (Hunter, 2010). Like control, trust reduces complexity (Jalava, 2003). Likewise, coaches, trainers, stable manages, etc., reduce complexity in the horse industry through communication that fosters trust. The coach "encourages you to reach beyond your perceived limits without scaring the daylights out of you" (Hunter, 2010). Even those people who the young rider does not know personally are working to ensure a productive equine community and would not encourage situations that might be dangerous.

There is a common understanding that to engage in competitive equestrian sport an individual must be actively involved in a training program. I argue this is because of the social systems trust that develops through participation in a training regime. As one participant says,

> "Well now I do it more for pleasure in terms of my own sanity and getting away from things, but before it was a sport and the competition aspect was large. I want to get back into that at some point, get back into having goals, working towards shows and that kind of thing, it's just a matter of being in a stable life environment to be able to do that I guess" (Kathy, 2012)

This respondent highlights the commitment she had during her youth to making goals and progressing toward competitions. She explains that this is something she would like to do again but that would require more active involvement in the equestrian community that she refers to as "a stable life environment".

Luhmann (1992) explains that human beings are environmental parts of social systems. Horses are also environmental parts of social systems. As one interviewee explained,

> "I will never go to a competition unless I think I'm over prepared, and if I went there and I was nervous or something, that just told me I had to work harder at home because I wasn't ready" (Kate, 2012).

Training develops trust in the system; if a rider is properly 'prepared' for a competition then they have trust in the system that has brought them to that competition.

A NETWORK OF SOCIAL SYSTEMS. The participants in this study are all current or former members of the equine industry and the Canadian pony club. The Canadian pony club is a community within the equine industry. These individuals are privy to the system trust that develops in the equine industry as a whole and the system trust that is evident within the structure of the Canadian pony club. The equestrian community in Canada, and more specifically Ontario, has begun to acknowledge the risks involved in when participating in the sport. The Ontario Equestrian Federation has developed program and educational materials that address helmet safety, stable safety, concussion prevention, and brain injury (OEF, 2013). The availability of these programs and educational resources suggest the presence of a risk society in the equestrian industry.

The risk society challenges us and motivates us to trust (Jalava, 2003), fostering the development of communication. Communication throughout the equestrian industry establishes it as a social system. Within the social system resources, knowledge, and experiences are shared which allow for the development of trust.

Equestrians in the Canadian Pony Club learn to trust the organization because it provides horsemanship skills training and riding skills training which prepares them for competition. Amy outlines what it is like to be in Pony Club,

> "it teaches you that you have to study and you have to train. And so, this is your next goal insight and by the end of the next year this is where you need to be. And so, that next level gets you into the next level of competition so it has that chain reaction" (2012).

This illustration of training and learning in Pony Club demonstrates how competitive youth equestrian sport works as a social system. Through the process of goal setting, training, and achievement, the youth equestrian develops trust in their abilities, in the abilities of their horse, and in the equestrian sport community.

The Canadian pony club is an organization that acts as network of information and knowledge provincially, nationally, and worldwide. The equestrian industry is composed of a variety of networks like the pony club that together build a larger network that distinguishes equestrian sport in Canada and globally. Communication through these networks at various levels builds the trust of equestrians. Those involved in competitive equestrian sport are able to trust the system because the complexity of equestrian sport is reconstructed through communication through the network (Luhmann, 1988). The risk of

participating in equestrian sport is acknowledged through the development of trust (Weber & Carter, 1998).

CONCLUSION

This study is limited to an analysis of equestrian media and equestrian industry studies, and the retrospective experiences of female equestrians in Canada. The form of interspecies trust that evolves among Canadian equestrians may be culturally specific. It is possible that in other countries or regions equestrians do not trust the equestrian community as they do in Canada. However, in this case, social system trust and interactional trust combine in equestrian sport to produce interspecies trust. This form of trust is unique to the human-horse relationship and built out of a common bond and partnership between horse and human, as well as goal setting and training that situate the human-horse relationship within a sport community. The community or network of equestrian sport in combination with the interactional trust between horse and rider results in interspecies trust, but also makes competitive youth equestrian sport possible.

Interactional trust allows for the formation of intimate bonds, meaningful relationships, and a human-horse partnership. System trust develops out of the equestrian community and provides the conditions through which young equestrians can train with their horses and work towards their goals. Communication within the equestrian community allows for knowledge dissemination and mitigation of risk. Federal and provincial equestrian organizations provide resources and education that help equestrians to trust the sport as a whole. Equestrians can trust that when they attend a competition they will not be putting themselves or their horse in danger. They can also trust in the

relationship they have built in their horse. Through the process of training with a horse, equestrian's build interactional and system trust. When they test their abilities at a competition it is the community of coaches, clinicians, judges, horse show organizers, and horse breeders who have all contributed to their interspecies trust. The combination of interactional and system trust is the foundation of equestrian sport, it is interspecies trust.

This paper has contributed to the expanding literature on interspecies relations and equestrian sport. Through a demonstration of the complexity of human-animal relationships I hope to encourage scholars to conduct future research on equestrian sport and to explore the nature of horse sport worldwide. Future researchers should examine how current social, economic, and cultural conditions may influence equestrian sport. Further, interspecies trust in the context of human-horse relationships may be unique; researchers should examine how interspecies trust develops between different species of human-animal partnerships. Understanding trust may be used to develop our knowledge of human-animal relations.

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PAPER 3:
SOCIO-CULTURAL CHANGES IN CANADIAN EQUESTRIAN SPORT

The final paper in this thesis has been accepted as a chapter in the forthcoming edited anthology *Equestrian Cultures in Global and Local Arenas* by Miriam Adelman and Kirrilly Thompson, however, a final draft has not been submitted to the book yet. It is possible that minor changes may be made to this paper before it is published, but in large part the content will remain the same.

This paper explores how equestrian sport has evolved in Canada, more specifically Ontario, since the introduction of Pony Club in 1934. Markovits and Queen (2009) assert that the ways in which humans relate to animals have changed over the last four decades. These alterations result from societal shifts and cultural changes that all advanced industrial societies have experienced since the late 1960s and early 1970s (Markovits & Queen, 2009). These changes were reflected in the Canadian equine industry slightly later (beginning in the late 1970s/early 1980s) but became evident as the role and perceived utility of the Canadian Pony Club changed and other forms of organized equestrian sport were introduced.

Unlike papers one and two in this thesis, where the methods consisted of document analysis, interviews, and media analysis, there was limited media to support this paper. Although equine industry blogs, websites, and online magazines were helpful in developing an understanding of the human-horse relationship, the equestrian sport experience, and the culture of the horse stable, very few media sources focus on the Canadian Pony Club. One piece produced by Equine Canada (in 2013) that has continued to circulate over social media is the YouTube video titled "Builder (Organization) –

Canadian Pony Club" which outlines the history of the Canadian Pony Club and features famous and professional equestrians who participated in Pony Club during their youth. Equestrians such as Ian Millar, Jim Elder, and Beth Underhill, who were all on the Canadian Olympic team at some point, speak about their Pony Club experiences and how Pony Club was influential in shaping who they are today as people and as equestrians. This piece was analyzed for the purposes of this paper as an industry study and media document.

This paper has been conditionally accepted for publication in the forthcoming edited anthology *Equestrian Cultures in Global and Local Arenas,* edited by M. Adelman and K. Thompson.

Today the Canadian equine industry is privatized, commodified, and dominated by women. In Ontario, Canada, youth female equestrians account for approximately twenty-nine percent of the equestrians who compete at horse shows (OEF, 2013). Junior females and adult females account for approximately eighty-six percent of the individuals competing at horse shows throughout Ontario (OEF, 2013). The industry, however, has not always been this way. Using the retrospective experiences of current and former female equestrians, I explore how equestrian sport in Canada has evolved since 1934. The Pony Club began in Great Britain in 1929. Each Pony Club had ties to a hunt club and there was a strong military presence in each hunt club. In 1934, through military connections, the Pony Club was established in Ontario, Canada (The Pony Club, 2013). The Canadian Pony Club, much like its British counterpart, had enormous success in the first few years (Canadian Pony Club, 2013).

This paper explores the changes in youth equestrian sport that have occurred in Canada since the introduction of the Pony Club in 1934. In this paper I argue that, before the 1980s, equestrian sport served, for young women, many of the same purposes as bicycling and golf. It was emancipatory and liberating while safely remaining within the culturally acceptable confines of the privileged group. Beginning in the late 1960s through to the early 1980s, a shift towards neo-liberal economic logic led to social, economic, and cultural changes in Canadian equestrian sport. There was a movement away from volunteer sport organizations towards private forms of organized sport. In

equestrian sport, the role and perceived utility of the Canadian Pony Club, arguably the largest volunteer equestrian sport organization at the time, began to change. This late-modern shift created a market for sport and encouraged the privatization of equestrian sport. Today, members of the equestrian community contest the value of Pony Club as a youth sport. The organization still offers cultural capital through education and training but, in a late-modern society, its ability to produce cultural capital through competition has declined due to the introduction of new equestrian sport organizations and changes in the consumption of sport.

THE EARLY YEARS

The history of sport in Canada is characterized by cultural struggle (Hall, 2007). The cultural practices of the privileged group were legitimated and valued; white men had control over physical activity opportunities and sporting culture (Hall, 2007). Women and members of other subordinate groups had to fight to be included in sports and had to compete for recognition of the alternative activities they engaged in. The 'safety' bicycle was one of the first forms of physical activity in which women took part (Hall, 2007). For women that had the time and money to use a bicycle, it was a means of freedom, entertainment, transportation, and a way to exercise and maintain their health. Hall (2007) argues that, in sporting contexts, it helped to "redefine the relationship between the sexes" (p.59). Women also found a place in golf, acting as social conveners at their husbands' golf clubs. It was not until the 1890s that they were able to take up the game themselves (Hall, 2007).

In equestrian sport, English women began participating in fox-hunting as early as the 1700s. Guttman (1991) explains that "it was actually quite common for an upper-class English girl to learn to ride and to join the men as they galloped across the moors, cleared ditches, and sailed over fences"(p. 81). In Canada, the first hunt club was formed in 1843 and for the first two decades was it was only open to military officers (Toronto North York Hunt, 2013). It is unclear when exactly women became involved in Canadian hunts but it was sometime after 1860 (Toronto North York Hunt, 2013). In the late 1880s and early 1900s, 'society women' in North America began playing equestrian polo but at the time they were still riding sidesaddle (Gilbert & Gillett, 2013). The *New York Times* published an article about a women's polo match in Aiken, South Carolina in 1901, which outlined how women who rode 'man fashion' were more successful in the polo match (Gilbert & Gillett, 2013).

THE CANADIAN PONY CLUB

When the Canadian Pony Club was formed in 1934, the objective was to offer children an opportunity to learn the principles of horsemanship and engage in equestrian sport (The Pony Club, 2013). The first Pony Club in Canada, the Eglinton Pony Club, was initially made up of junior members of the Eglinton Hunt Club. Following the guidelines of the Pony Club in Britain, any child could join the Pony Club by paying $0.75 per year (The Pony Club, 2013). At the time, events for juniors at adult horse shows were limited; Pony Club competitions were the first youth equestrian events. The Pony Club was established to teach horsemanship and offer competitive pursuits. It now exists in at least 30 countries worldwide (Buckley, Dunn, & More, 2004). It offers young

people a variety of equestrian opportunities including, horsemanship and equestrian education, competitions in showjumping, eventing, dressage, tetathathalon, and Prince Phillip Games. The organization is built upon volunteers who teach lessons, officiate at shows, test members, run clinics, and help fundraise for clubs and regions (Crowe, 2009). In Canada, it is widely regarded as one of the most affordable ways to participate in youth equestrian sport. From the introduction of Pony Club in 1934 through to the 1980s, it was one of the most popular youth equestrian sport opportunities. In the 1980s, the introduction of new equestrian sport competitions weakened the presence of Pony Club in Canada. Membership, however, did not start to decline until 1994 (CPC Annual Report, 2012). The organization has never been able to recapture the success of its early years. In 2010, Equine Canada estimated that there were approximately 5,800 Canadian Pony Club members. Yet, a more thorough review of the 2012 Canadian Pony Club annual report and the Canadian Pony Club website suggests that it is more likely that there are approximately 2300 Pony Club members currently active across Canada (CPC Annual Report, 2012).

THE TRANSITION YEARS

In the late 1960s through to the early 1980s, Canadian society, Canadian sport, and equestrian sport in Canada transitioned into a late-modern society. The rapid social changes experienced in this late-modern era included advancements in the women's movement, growth of multiculturalism, and expansion of the education system. These changes encouraged a new economic logic. In sport, the late 1960s through to the early 1980s brought new ways of consuming sport with the introduction of Canadian major

league baseball teams, new expressions and uses of physical activity and sport (as demonstrated by figures such as Terry Fox), and interests in new types of sport. As Atkinson (2010) explains, there was a movement by working-class youth towards sports like skateboarding because it was a free form of athleticism that was in direct contrast to the parent-controlled, rule bound, commercial, heavily competitive, exclusionary, and authoritarian forms of organized sport that preceded it. In equestrian sport, the movement away from Pony Club was not marked by the advent of sport for those who would not previously have participated in sport. Instead, more people began paying for services rather than borrowing, trading, or volunteering.

During the transition from modern industrialism to late-modernism, a collapse of traditional socio-cultural boundaries could be distinguished whereby notions of gender, region, and class (among others) were more distinctly bound (Atkinson, 2010). In late-modern societies, institutions are subject to critical evaluation and publics question the ability of institutions to regulate modern boundaries (Beck, 1992; Atkinson, 2010). Belief in totalizing frames, such as the aristocratic patriarchy upon which traditional sport is based, is challenged in risk societies of the late-modern era (Beck, 1992; Atkinson, 2010). Atkinson (2010) explains that de-institutionalization, moralization, diversification, and increased emphasis on egalitarian forms of sport are indications that modernist boundaries and traditional forms of modernist sport are being broken down. With this breakdown, there is opportunity to explore what Atkinson (2010) refers to as 'late-modern culturescapes' wherein physical activities, lifestyles, physical cultural practices, and identities are not as mainstream or reflective of traditional sport. In the analysis

section of this paper, I will explore how the introduction of new equestrian sport opportunities in the late 1960s through to the early 1980s correspond with both a new economic logic in Canadian society, as well as changes to the way sport was experienced and consumed.

EQUESTRIAN SPORT

In the last fifteen years literature on equestrian sport has evolved and now includes a range of topics and theoretical orientations. Scholars have examined disciplines within equestrian sport including showjumping (Coulter, 2013), dressage (Dashper, 2012b), eventing (Wipper, 2001), polo (Gilbert and Gillett, 2013), rodeo (Adelman & Becker, 2013; Young & Gerber, 2013), ranch activities (Slatta, 1986) natural horsemanship (Birke, 2007; Birke, 2008), horseracing (Cassidy, 2002; Velijia & Flynn, 2010; Butler, 2013a, 2013b), and therapeutic riding (Emory, 1992; Cawley, Cawley, & Retter, 1994; Bizub, Joy, & Donaldson, 2003; Burgon, 2003; Dell, Chalmers, Bresette, Swain, & Rankin, 2011). They have explored animal welfare and violence in equestrian sport (Young & Gerber, 2013), equestrian tourism (Ollenburg, 2005; Helgadottir, 2006), and equestrian sport law and regulation (Herlin-Karnell, 2013). Studies have examined gender in various contexts, for instance, at Olympic (Dashper, 2012a) and amateur levels (Pfister, 1993; Nikku, 2005; Forsberg & Tebelius, 2011; Ojanen, 2012; Gilbert, 2013), as experienced through the body (Adelman & Moares, 2008; Knijnik, 2013), as perpetuated by the media (Plymoth, 2012), and in specific disciplines like, dressage (Dashper, 2012b; Smith, 2013). Lee and Macdonald (2009) examine the sporting experiences of rural youth and argue that gender roles impact perceptions of appropriate physical activity options.

Adelman and Knijnik's (Eds.) (2013) anthology *Gender and Equestrian Sport: Riding around the World,* has been influential in the development of a literature on equestrian sport. Gillett and Gilbert's (2013) *Animals, Sport, and Society*, has a number of chapters on equestrian sport and offers new theoretical approaches to the study of interspecies relations, helping this area of research gain recognition within mainstream sociological debates.

Scholars have examined social class and social capital in a variety of equestrian sport disciplines including combined driving (Grey, 1989), polo (Merlin, 2004; Riedi, 2006; Gilbert & Gillett, 2013), dressage (Fletcher & Dashper, 2012), showjumping (Coulter, 2013), horse racing (Cassidy, 2002; Velija & Flynn, 2010; Bjork-Billing, 2012; Butler, 2013a, 2013b), and bullfighting (Thompson, 2010, 2011, 2012). In combined driving, Gray (1989) argues that although the sport is perceived to belong to an upper class community, only 31% of the combined drivers were upper class, some were lower class, and most were middle class. Scholars have examined social class in horseracing, for example, Cassidy (2002) and Butler (2013b) use Bourdieu's concept of habitus to explain the social structure of racing. Butler (2013b) examines female participation in horseracing and argues that acceptance into the racing field requires women to embody a racing habitus. This habitus is characterized by fitness, assertiveness, strength, stamina and toughness.

In this paper, I expand upon the literature presented here and examine how changes in Canadian society and the consumption of sport have challenged the value of the youth equestrian sport discipline Pony Club as a sporting opportunity. In an analysis

of Pony Club participation in Ontario, Canada, I draw on Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction.

THEORY

This paper draws on the theoretical insights of Bourdieu, particularly his understanding of fields of cultural production. According to Bourdieu (1984), a field is a situation within which agents and social positions exist. In fields of cultural production, cultural capital is circulated and can be exchanged for forms of distinction (Bourdieu, 1984). An individual can obtain a form of distinction that might help them advance in society (or it might not).

In Bourdieu's (1993) *The Field of Cultural Production*, he focuses on artistic and literary fields and explains that they are fields of forces and fields of struggles. The struggles transform and maintain the forces of the field. Individuals in the field occupy different positions and struggle to improve and defend their positions. Bourdieu (1993) refers to this as position-takings. Changes in power relations create changes in artistic and literary possibilities that make up the space of possibilities. In the same manner, we could argue that changes in power relations would create changes in the sporting possibilities that make up the space of possibilities in the field of sport. Through struggles of power-relations, individuals defend their form and force in relation to the space of possibilities. The value of new positions is realized against different positions, some positive and some negative. Even when positions are the same, a change in the field creates new options for producers and consumers and the meaning of work (in this case equestrian sport) changes automatically. Bourdieu's (1984) cultural market is the

result of purposeful development of two reasonably independent logics. Firstly, the field of production is where products are developed, and secondly, the field of consumption is where dominant social classes determine tastes. Within the equine industry, competitive struggles over equestrian skills are a source of changing tastes in the field.

In the analysis section of this paper I explore how changes in equestrian sport and the value of Pony Club have been influenced by changes in late-modern society. In the field of (sport) production, when a new sport group becomes more involved and visible, the power relations of the field are transformed. To understand an individual's inclination towards a particular type of sport, we must understand their disposition towards sport (Bourdieu, 1993). The field of production, in part, produces inclination towards sport. The habitus, which Bourdieu (1993) identifies as an individual's system of dispositions, is the foundation upon which life-styles are generated. The field of positions is important to understanding the field of position-takings (1993). In this paper, I outline how the introduction of new equine sport groups has transformed the power relations within equestrian sport. I draw evidence of a changing equine industry from interviews with equestrians who participated in the Canadian Pony Club during their youth and through document analysis of equine industry reports and Canadian Pony Club reports. I explore how changes in equestrian sport made Pony Club a less viable avenue for the creation of cultural capital. I examine these changes and suggest that they are likely changes in 'degree rather than kind' (Bourdieu, 1978).

Bourdieu (1978) argues that "the history of sport is a relatively autonomous history which, even when marked by the major events of economic and social history, has

its own tempo, its own evolutionary laws, its own crises, in short, its specific chronology" (p.821). In the analysis section of this paper I explore how Bourdieu's theory of fields of cultural production can be used to understand transformations in equestrian sport between modern to late-modern periods in Canada.

METHODS

Drawing on document analysis of equine industry studies and Pony Club reports as well as interviews with forty-three current or former Pony Club members, I explore the perspectives of current and former Pony Club members in Ontario, Canada and Canadian Pony Club membership histories. Interviews were conducted with females over the age of eighteen who participated in the Canadian Pony Club during their youth. Interviewees ranged in age from eighteen years old to seventy-three years old, representing membership from approximately 1950 to 2012, a period of about sixty years. Participants were organized into three age groups, under thirty years old (ten interviewees), thirty to fifty years old (twenty-one interviewees), and over fifty years old (twelve interviewees). Some interviewees were members of the Canadian Pony Club for over ten years while others had short involvements of only one or two years. Participants were not asked and did not identify their race or ethnicity for this study. Recruitment was through snowball sampling, the Canadian Pony Club Alumni database, and through calls for participants posted in relevant Pony Club Facebook groups.

As a former Pony Club member, I had comparatively easy access to this population. I also volunteer with a Pony Club on occasion, giving me access to a network of individuals associated with the Canadian Pony Club. I am what Adler and Adler

(1987) refer to as a complete member and this acted as a starting point for the snowball sampling. The Canadian Pony Club Alumni database is publicly available (accessed through the Canadian Pony Club website), where hundreds of former Pony Club members have voluntarily provided their names, email addresses, years they were involved in Pony Club, and, in some cases, a brief note about their experiences in Pony Club. Participants were contacted by email, informed of the study, and given an opportunity to choose to be involved; approximately ten percent of potential participants withdrew after learning about the study. Interviews were conducted with forty-three current or former Pony Club members. The interviews took place over the phone (thirty-three interviews) and in-person (ten interviews) when geographic and time restrictions allowed. In-person interviews were conducted at participants' farms, homes, or in a location chosen by them. Field notes for the in-person interviews provided context for the analysis. Interviews ranged in length from thirty-five to ninety minutes, and each interview was voice recorded and transcribed with permission from the participant.

Each interviewee was asked a series of questions that included (among other questions), how did you become involved in the Canadian Pony Club? What does the Canadian Pony Club offer young equestrians? Does the Canadian Pony Club differ when compared to other horse sport organizations? I outline how perceptions of Pony Club as a sporting opportunity change (although only marginally) depending on when the individual was involved, and demonstrate that this is a reflection of changes in equestrian sport and Canadian society as a whole. In the late-modern era, Canadians began to move

away from volunteer sport and started consuming sport and physical activity in different ways.

Interviews were supplemented with document analysis of equine industry studies (Equine Canada, 2003, 2010, 2013), and Canadian Pony Club annual reports. As themes presented, they informed the analysis concurrently. Three themes that are discussed in the analysis section of this paper consider how the equine industry has changed since 1934: participation, competition, and coaching. In the next section, I outline how each of these themes is significant to understanding the equine industry in Canada as it has evolved since 1934.

ANALYSIS

In this analysis I argue that significant changes took place in the Canadian equine industry beginning in the late 1960s as new equestrian sport organizations were introduced and the field of cultural production in equestrian sport experienced a shift in power-relations. I apply Bourdieu's (1984) theory of cultural production as a means of understanding how a shift towards neo-liberal economic logic in Canadian society influenced changes in the Canadian equestrian industry. In this section, I identify three themes that inform the analysis of equestrian sport throughout history: participation, competition, and coaching. For each of these three themes I explain how individuals who participated in equestrian sport during their youth experienced coaching, competition, and participation differently, depending on when they were involved.

PARTICIPATION: MOVING TOWARDS A STREAMLINED APPROACH

The eldest participants in this study were over fifty years of age when interviewed. They were asked a range of questions regarding their participation in equestrian sport, the equine industry, and Pony Club. The answers to these questions were instrumental in distinguishing the nature of the equine industry, equestrian sport, and Pony Club during the 1940s through 1970s. During these years, Pony Club was the primary youth equestrian sport opportunity in Ontario (Equine Canada, 2013). When asked about their experiences growing up horseback riding, respondents drew almost exclusively (some had also participated in breed shows) on their experiences in Pony Club.

Interviewees in the oldest age group explained that, for them, Pony Club was an introduction to everything that had to do with horses and horseback riding. As Karen explained, "in Pony Club it wasn't enough to know how to ride; you had to know the horsemanship as well. To move up your levels, you had to know the theory, you had to know all of it." Pony Club was a space for youth to learn about horses and horseback riding but it was also a place where friendships were made; it was an avenue for establishing social capital. Through participation in the Pony Club, young equestrians also built cultural capital through education and specialized training. Through an accumulation of cultural and social capital, as a result of unique equestrian experiences (such as clinics and coaching) that other youth equestrians would not normally be partial to, Pony Club youth developed a unique equine habitus. As Diana outlines:

> Pony Club originally started as a way of getting youth involved in the local hunt club, but in order to do that they needed to teach them the basics like

> how to go out and not pass the hunt master, or they needed to teach them how to go out and do cross country and jump the jumps, so they started Pony Club so they could teach them things like the dressage basics.

When Pony Club was first introduced in Canada and through its early years, it was like a golf club, or more appropriately, a junior hunt club. However, hunt clubs and golf clubs were exclusive, aristocratic, and membership was a depiction of social class. Pony Club was formed with the intention that any child could join for a fee of $0.75 per year. To participate in Pony Club, a child did not have to own a horse or even ride, there was something for everyone. The club served as a way to get youth active and involved in different activities. It was more than competition; the organization provided opportunities for learning, education, and cultural experiences. Although it may not have been the intention of the Pony Club to produce cultural capital and sustain social capital, those processes were inevitable results of their activities. Within the field of equestrian sport, Pony Club produced dispositions that were desirable to the upper class. A Pony Clubber before the 1980s was respected and valued as a member of the equestrian community. The Pony Clubber had strong riding skills and a developed knowledge of horsemanship. Given that there were very few youth equestrian sport opportunities at the time, Pony Clubbers were able to defend their form and force within the space of opportunities with relative ease because there were limited alternative opportunities. The Pony Club offered young equestrians sporting experiences with horses and there was a focus on developing social relationships through equestrian sport. Youth would attend rallies and meetings

and build what many interviewees referred to as life-long friendships. There were a wide variety of opportunities available to the Pony Clubber, as Barb outlines:

> In [Pony Club's] scope of competitive opportunities, it's got so many disciplines, with quiz where you don't have to be able to ride a horse to participate in quiz, to learn the knowledge. Then there is to tetrathlon of course, and games, and rallies. There is such a huge spread between all the options out there, and the all-roundedness of the sport when you start to include things like to tetrathlon, it reaches out to sports that don't include horses.

It is evident in Barb's comment that being part of Pony Club was about more than riding horses. It was about being involved in a network of individuals, becoming educated, and becoming physically active. The Pony Club was a field of production used to develop social and physical capital throughout the mid-twentieth century. Many respondents distinguished that, in addition to teaching horsemanship and being a place for youth to form friendships, the Pony Club was a good place to try a variety of equestrian disciplines. It was built upon the values of sportsmanship, reciprocity, and philanthropy, and this was reflected in the way that the testing was organized in the early years. Emma explains:

> When I did my "A" test, we did it on borrowed horses which I think made it a little more fair because now you have to have really good horses, and you have to have horses that are quite specialized…that takes them a couple of horses to get the right one. I think it was better when you rode

someone else's horse because you didn't have to have quite as high quality of horse.

Traditionally, education and testing were fundamental parts of Pony Club and today these are still defining characteristics of the organization. However, contemporary members are not required to test and all tests are done on an individual's own horse or the horse they bring to the testing. In the early years, Pony Club had a monopoly over youth equestrian sport experiences but, as the twentieth century progressed, new avenues for youth participation in equestrian sport opened up and the equine industry in Canada began to change.

In the late 1960s through to the early 1980s, the introduction of three specialized and competitive equestrian organizations marked changes in the Ontario equestrian industry. These three organizations represented the Olympic equestrian events that continue to comprise horse sport at the summer Olympics: dressage, eventing, and showjumping. In 1969, the Canadian Dressage Riders and Owners Association (CADORA), an organization dedicated to promoting and developing dressage in Canada, was founded (CADORA, 2013). Shortly thereafter, a provincial chapter was formed to serve the needs of dressage enthusiasts in Ontario. In 1983, the Trillium Hunter Jumper Association (THJA) was formed as an association that "would offer exhibitors an inexpensive and viable alternative to pursue their horse interests. It was also intended as a training ground for new officials and course designers" (THJA, 2013). In 1990, the Ontario Horse Trial Association (OHTA) was formed as an organization that would support eventing in Ontario. The OHTA is an organization committed to promoting

educational activities and competitions related to eventing (OHTA, 2013). These three competitive equestrian sport opportunities were available to adults and youth, increasing the number of events that young equestrians could attend throughout the show season (which typically runs from about April to October in Ontario).

The introduction of new equestrian sporting opportunities coincided with a unique time in Canadian history. In sport, people were participating in different ways and engaging in activities that they had never attempted before. In society as a whole, there was a shift towards neo-liberal economic logic which encouraged economic values over non-economic preferences (Harvey, 2005). At this time there was a breaking down of traditional economic and social boundaries. As Bourdieu (1984) explains, changes in power relations create sporting possibilities that make up the space of possibilities. With the introduction of new equestrian competitions to make up the space of possibilities, individuals now had a new field within which they would defend their form. Therefore, equestrians who grew up competing and participating in Pony Club developed capital through the formal horsemanship training and riding training that they received. They also developed social capital through affiliation with hunt clubs and other youth equestrians. As new avenues for sport were introduced, the power of Pony Club as a capital producing organization was challenged. Rather than being competent equestrians familiar with a variety of different equestrian disciplines, neo-liberal economic logic led equestrians to specialize in one equestrian discipline and build capital in one specific type of equestrian sport. With the introduction of new equestrian sport organizations, equestrians began to identify themselves more exclusively with one discipline. One

interviewee explained that, although her experiences in Pony Club were consistent with the original Pony Club model, she had seen the organization change over the years. Sarah said:

> Well, back when I was involved, plenty of it was about understanding and getting a taste of the different aspects of the horse industry. It is not like that now because kids are allowed to specialize in show jumping when they are still jumping cross rails which is, in my opinion, completely asinine because I believe they've lost their purpose, they've lost what they were really able to do for kids, which was give them a taste of everything and teach them about loving horses and being responsible for their horses…that's really what Pony Club was about.

Many of the interviewees in this study explained that Pony Club introduced them to horse sport and then they moved on to other organizations for more intense participation in disciplines such as dressage, show jumping, or eventing. This path was typical for the time; after participating in Pony Club, riders almost always went on to participate in other forms of equestrian sport. The change that occurred with the adaptation of neo-liberal economic logic was that an increased number of young riders were not starting their equestrian education in Pony Club but were instead starting in specialized boarding barns such as hunter-jumper, eventing, or dressage barns. Young equestrians who did not participate in Pony Club would consequently only know the discipline that was taught at the facility that they attended.

COMPETITIONS: EQUATING COMPLEXITY WITH VALUE

The frequency of competitions was a distinguishing factor between the experiences of those who participated in the early years of equestrian sport and those that were involved more recently. In the early years, there were infrequent competitions. Respondents explained that Pony Club events were approximately once a month through the summer months and participants often rode their horses to the competitions. Given the time period when some of the interviewees were members of Pony Club it is not surprising that horse transport was somewhat novel. As Peggy explains, "Well because I am at the age that I am, I'm sixty three, a lot of time there were competitions around the Aurora area, but even with Pony Club a lot of times we would hack over to meetings and so on." Some interviewees explained that, in the early years, they would be at horse shows every weekend because they participated in hunts, fall fairs, and Pony Club events. Nonetheless, the type of Pony Club events that were offered were often limited to rallies, Prince Phillip Games, clinics, and educational events. As Emma outlines, "they didn't have show jumping back then. When I was in Pony Club it was just the rallies, and even Prince Philip Games…I never did that." The early Pony Club events strongly encouraged teamwork, sportsmanship, and the development of a social network within equestrian sport - values that are not necessarily consistent with late-modern ideals and neo-liberal economic logic. Instead, Pony Club, as an organization and in the competitions it held in the early years, was used to promote relationships between young equestrians. Competitive equestrian sport was relatively new in the modern era and the competitions

were underdeveloped when compared to today's equestrian show circuits. Kathy explains that:

> In those days you would go to these shows at fairs and you would just learn by getting in there and going to a jumping class and going to hunter class. And your dressage was very minimal in those days; there was very little interest in it. In those days you got a nice hunter going in a nice trot, with hand gallop, and you could take it in and get a really good mark, because it wasn't as developed, it wasn't as focused as it is now.

At the time when Kathy was engaged in equestrian sport, individuals could find a place for themselves within the industry through trial and error. One of the eldest interviewees in this study outlined that, in her time in equestrian sport, she saw the sport change as more money came into it. She suggested that there was a time when, if you worked hard enough, anyone could make it to the Royal Winter Fair. The Royal Winter Fair is held in November and now in its 92nd year; it is considered Canada's most prestigious equestrian and agricultural event. As some interviewees identified, there has been, since the early years of equestrian sport, a commodification of services within the industry. Presently, depending on the discipline that you engage in, qualifying for the Royal Winter Fair can require a significant financial investment since the cost of owning or leasing a horse, keeping and caring for a horse, transporting the horse to shows and clinics, and weekly or more coaching may be required.

The increased financial investment that is required to participate in some disciplines and ranks of equestrian sport has challenged Pony Club's ability to produce

capital. In other disciplines, competitions are now held almost weekly and test the same skills every week. In Pony Club, by contrast, there is a competition every few weeks and different skills are tested each time. Through the course of a show season, a Pony Clubber in 2014 might test their show jumping, dressage, or eventing skills in competition two or three times each. If, however, they are participating in show jumping on the THJA circuit, they could test their skills at competitions upwards of fifteen times (THJA, 2013). Therefore, in struggles of power-relations within the field of equestrian sport, individual organizations that are dedicated to specific disciplines have more force; as a result, Pony Club has had to fight to maintain its form. When a younger former Pony Clubber was asked how often she attended competitions, Mary answered "every weekend, usually twice in one weekend. When I was little I used to go to a Trillium show on Saturday and then a Pony Club show on Sunday, with the same pony" (2012).

When explaining the nature of equestrian competitions in late-modern years, participants argued that Pony Club competitions are more supportive than other competitions. However, the level of riding is not as high at Pony Club competitions as it is at other equestrian competitions and, among the youth that participate in Pony Club, many also participate in other equestrian competitions. Although many stated that Pony Club was the most supportive and encouraging equestrian community they were part of (and many believed it was as equally competitive when compared to other equestrian sport opportunities), not all considered the caliber of riding to be as high as the level of riding that could be found in other organizations. As Amanda explained:

> I wouldn't say it's less competitive, but it was definitely friendlier. People were still competitive but in terms of their demeanor, like you were competitive but you still talk to all the people there versus especially the "A", like, if you're not with the same trainer then you might not talk".

Amanda's comment highlights the continuing tradition of sportsmanship in Pony Club that has been maintained despite changes to the equine industry as a whole. The "A" that Amanda is referring to is now considered the elite hunter/jumper circuit in Ontario. Its entry costs are the most expensive and, because of that, it attracts riders with the most financial backing. Steacy explains one of the challenges that Pony Club has faced over the years as new forms of equestrian sport have challenged its value. Steacy outlined:

> I think that people get the impression that Pony Club is not competitive at all, so they don't want to show the Pony Club circuit just because they don't feel like they're going to get anything out of it...which I definitely don't agree with because I do prefer to show the Pony Club shows than I did at Trillium because it's definitely more accepting. When I showed Trillium there was a lot of, well it was very catty; even within my own barn that was there, there was no teamwork.

Steacy highlights how equestrian sport organizations such as 'Trillium' (which is the THJA) are less supportive and, even among the riders within her barn, there was very little support for each other. Interviewee Kate continues to highlight differences between Pony Club and other organizations, noting that:

> [Pony Club is] certainly is its own entity within the horse industry. I think that people look past it, it's not that it's outdated or irrelevant; a lot of the things that it teaches are very relevant, but it's just that it hasn't kept up with the rest of it. And it needs to appeal to a higher level, you know what it is, it's Pony Club has become very backyardie and it shouldn't be. Everyone should be starting in that and, if you look at a lot of our professionals, a lot of them were past 'A' level Pony Clubbers.

The success of many accomplished Pony Clubbers on the national and international circuits has, for years, supported the perceived value of Pony Club. The Equine Canada YouTube video uses successful ex-Pony Clubbers in an attempt to promote the organization (Equine Canada, 2013). The challenge is that Pony Club has failed to keep their level of competition in line with the rising standards in the field of equestrian sport. Sarah argues, "I have been in very competitive Pony Club competitions, but in general they don't ever emphasize the competition. You know like it's great to win at 'C' rally but it's not the same as winning Bromont." In this statement, "Bromont" is a reference to an international equestrian facility in Quebec, Canada. Many equestrians aspire to ride at this prestigious facility and participation in an event that takes place at a facility like Bromont is a reflection of status within the field of equestrian sport. In early years of equestrian sport, social capital was achieved through a person's network of friends. In this late-modern era of equestrian sport, equestrians continue to build social capital through their network at a particular stable and through training with well-respected coaches but they also draw on symbolic capital which is achieved by competing

at prestigious equestrian venues and winning at important competitions. In the new era of equestrian sport, an individuals' knowledge of horsemanship, a skill that can be learned through Pony Club, is not as valued as their success in the show ring.

Interviewees in this study tended to focus on the level of camaraderie that Pony Club offered which was not found in other areas of the equine industry. This suggests that the introduction of new forms of equestrian sport opportunities has created a less inviting and encouraging atmosphere in equestrian sport. The character of equestrian sport has also been influenced by a commodification of services, a commodification that, by comparison, Pony Club has avoided. Pony Club's ability to avoid commodification has not made it more valuable to the average equestrian however; instead it is now perceived (by some) to be a place for poorer quality riders and horses.

THE RISE OF A COACHING PROFESSION

In the early years of equestrian sport, coaching and training were less formal in the sense that young equestrians went for clinics once a month rather than having a lesson with their coach multiple times a week. Instruction had its roots in British training models and many interviewees explained that their coaches were more strict and particular than they believe coaches are today. One interviewee explained the volunteerism in early Pony Club and outlined the British influences on the Canadian Pony Club:

> It's funny because there's one parent that I can think of and her daughter wants to ride and wants to be involved and she has just doesn't get it. She doesn't get why we are all running around doing all these things, but I

> think they are also a little bit less educated not less educated in terms of them personally but less educated in terms of them understanding the whole family volunteer tradition. I mean, my mom will say in England it was the grandparents that all ran the clubs because it was a lifelong thing (Dana, 2012).

Dana's comment highlights the value placed on volunteerism in Pony Club, a value that opposes neo-liberal economic logic. In early years, many of the coaches, clinicians, and trainers gave instruction to Pony Clubbers on a volunteer basis. Janet explained:

> Almost everybody had their own horses. There were a few boarding stables but it wasn't the way it is now where there was a specific barn. Our meetings were varied from place to place; we would go to [name]'s place and ride there, and a couple different places where people who were volunteer coaches were located.

Despite the fact that the Pony Club was based upon volunteers and was supposedly open to anyone, interviewees identified that it was an upper class activity reserved for the elite. As Allison outlined, "it was really quite snooty when you look back on it, but that's the way the world was back then. Now, everybody rides no matter what background you come from, but back then it was kind of a closed club." The aristocratic nature of early Pony Clubs was not enforced, but was maintained through social class networks, routed in military and hunt club influences, which encouraged participation in equestrian sport. While equestrian sport evolved in Canada, hunt clubs have maintained their presence as an elite and socially exclusive form of equestrian sport.

By contrast, Pony Clubs did not. Both hunt clubs and Pony Clubs were built upon a platform that encouraged social relations, but hunt clubs only served one equestrian function; it was a place where members could hunt. Pony Clubs, however, encouraged their members to engage in a variety of equestrian disciplines and, although variety produced a more 'cultured' rider, it did not guarantee success in the show ring. The other difference between hunt clubs and Pony Clubs is that hunt clubs are exclusive; individuals often have to be nominated for membership by a current member of the club and they are required to pay a fee that can be up to $1900.00 a year (Toronto North York Hunt, 2013). Thus, Pony Clubs are more socially and economically accessible to youth than hunt clubs are to adults, and they also encourage any child/youth to participate. Changes to how cultural capital is accumulated in equestrian sport have challenged the Pony Clubs' ability to maintain membership through late-modern years.

Interviewees explained that, in the early years of Pony Club, riding instruction was done at clinics; very few people kept their horses at a boarding barn where they had access to a coach all the time and coaches did not generally go to shows with their students. As new forms of equestrian sport emerged, coaches took a more active role in the pursuits of their students at the home stable and at competitions. Today, in many of the equestrian disciplines, students have their coaches with them during the entirety of a competition. In Pony Club, however, having a coach (who is not a parent) attend a competition with his/her student is still not the norm.

One interviewee explained that, when she was in her late teenage years, she worked as a groom on different equestrian circuits. She felt that she had to help non-

Pony Club people a lot more than those who had been in Pony Club. Many of the interviewees in this study explained that, when they became older, they began to coach or offer clinics with the Pony Club to help give back. In addition, some also coached outside of Pony Club. As Julie explained, "I was always at the barn. I was either helping to coach a lesson or clean out stalls or meet the farrier or whatever." One of the older interviewees in the study expressed frustration with the current youth equestrians, saying:

> Having worked in Hunter-Jumper barns, they spend very little time on what's the correct way to do this. And the kids want to jump like yesterday and well it's like well we barely know how to turn and stop but we are going to be jumping these cavalettis today. It just boggles my imagination that you say to the kids: can you go get me such and such and they look at you and say, what? The kids nowadays don't have the theory, which the Pony Club really instills in you" (Diana, 2012).

This interviewee is not referring to contemporary Pony Club youth but rather to equestrian youth that participate in hunter and jumper events. Her concern is that the youth are doing more difficult riding tasks before understanding the basics of horsemanship. The need to have skills in horsemanship has decreased as coaches have taken a more active role in the equine industry. Susana explained, from a coach's perspective, why she feels Pony Club participation has decreased in more recent years and why it is not in a coach's best interest to take their students to Pony Club events. She said, "if you're a professional, you end up taking your clients where you're going to make money and Pony Club is not where you make the money…it's volunteer-based." This

statement reflects the argument I have outlined throughout this paper, namely that Pony Club has not adapted to the neo-liberal economic logic that has influenced the equestrian sport field throughout the late-modern years. The changes to power-relations that occurred in equestrian sport in the late 1960s through to the early 1980s have transformed the industry into an economically-driven field. Through struggles of power-relations, coaches have gravitated towards equestrian competitions that allow them to make money. The absence of volunteer coaches is a reflection of the more diverse group of social classes that now participate in equestrian sport and the establishment of equestrian coaching as a full-time occupation. The occupation, equestrian coach, is a position that resulted from a change in the economic logic of the equestrian industry.

CONCLUSION

Interviews with individuals who participated in equestrian sport during the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s suggest that in these years two social classes, upper class and lower class participants, characterized equestrian sport in Canada. Participants in the Canadian Pony Club were either the sons or daughters of doctors and highly paid professionals, or they were working class farm kids, the former more common than the latter. Despite being made up of two distinct socio-economic groups there was less division between the sporting experiences of each group because both upper class and lower class riders were competing against one another in the same competitions. Equestrians interviewed in this program of research suggest that, today there is a more complex range of socio-economic groups that participate in equestrian sport. From the individual who makes less than minimum wage working on the farm to the millionaire or even billionaire equestrian, and

everything in between. In the last thirty to forty years there have become more avenues for competition that allow a variety of socio-economic classes to participate in equestrian sport. These various forms of competition have stratified participation by each competitors' economic means.

In the late 1960s through to the early 1980s, Canadians began to approach sport and physical activity from a neo-liberal economic perspective. This meant that new forms of sport like skateboarding and endurance riding challenged traditional forms of aristocratic sport, such as golf and hunting. There was an increased consumption of sport as a spectacle through the availability of new technology and media, and increased opportunities to practice sport. In the Canadian equestrian industry, these shifts manifested through new disciplines like vaulting and endurance riding and new organizations to govern equestrian competition circuits, such as CADORA, OHTA, and THJA. New sport venues, such as the Caledon Equestrian Park in Ontario in 1973 (PAN AM, 2013) and Bromont equestrian Centre in Quebec in 1975 (Olympic Games, 1978), marked a new era in equestrian sport. Today, as Coulter (2013) explains, in the most elite levels of equestrian competition, known as the "A" circuit, horse owners are typically from the upper class. For many Canadians the cost of participation is too much (Coulter, 2013). However, there are circumstances where individuals are able to draw on social and familial networks in order to gain opportunities that allow them participate in the sport. There are ways to ride horses that are less expensive, including lower-ranked horse show circuits that require less financial investment (Coulter, 2013). Despite the financial

commitment often required to participate in equestrian sport, millions of people worldwide are active participants.

Buchanan and Dann (2006) outline that equestrians are primarily motivated by their 'love of horses'. They are also motivated by family involvement or encouragement and friend involvement or encouragement (Buchanan and Dann, 2006). Some equestrians even participate in higher levels of equestrian sport then one might suspect based on their income (Coulter, 2013). But for the most part, participants are grouped into levels of monetary commitment based on what they can financially afford. For instance, hunter/jumper discipline participants have their choice of 'schooling shows' that require the least amount of financial investment. These shows are often 'unsanctioned' meaning they are typically not recognized by Equine Canada or provincial groups such as the Ontario Equestrian Federation. Beyond schooling shows there are Bronze, Silver, Gold, and Platinum level equestrian competitions. The highest levels are the Gold and Platinum level shows, which include the "A" circuit, and are the most prestigious form of competitive hunter/jumper events. Coulter (2013, 2014) identifies, gold-rated "A" circuit competitions as accessible only to individuals with the required capital, and she explains that by their very existence these shows are a clear indication of distinction. By comparison, Pony Club competitions are generally Bronze level shows. These levels correspond to the type of sport license a rider has to hold in order to participate in the competition, but they also reflect the amount of financial investment the rider will have to make in that year. These levels (Bronze, Silver, Gold, and Platinum) now represent class in the equine industry and both structurally and symbolically organize the sport.

This paper argues that the Canadian Pony Club could not produce the frequency and size of competitions needed to maintain a competitive edge during this dynamic time in equestrian sport. Interviewees in this study suggested that young equestrians wanted more: more classes, more competitions, and more competitors. Yet, because these options were not available in Pony Club, young equestrians went elsewhere. There was an increased commodification of equestrian sport and, as a result the ways through which individuals achieved capital, the sport became more competition-focused. Riders wanted a Gold level competition and Pony Club was in the process of becoming, and latter became, a Bronze level form of competition.

Over the years, Pony Club, as a youth equestrian sport organization, has maintained its objectives and continues to advocate for sportsmanship, horsemanship, and the development of riding skills through training and education. It is (as many of the interviewees in this study have outlined) a very unique and valuable organization. It has not, however, adapted to the changes within Canadian society that have led the industry to adopt neo-liberal economic logic. On account of Pony Club's failure to adapt, it has not seen the same growth in participation that other equestrian organizations experienced throughout the late-modern era. Future research would benefit from an examination of how changes in equestrian sport have occurred in other countries. Does the Canadian equestrian industry have a unique social and cultural history, or have other equestrian industries experienced similar transitions over time? How do equestrian industries in other countries encourage the accumulation of social and cultural capital? With Pony Clubs in over thirty different countries all over the world, how does the Pony Club

experience differ depending on location? Literature on equestrian sport has seen considerable development within the last fifteen years but there are still substantial theoretical and methodological areas that would benefit from further examination. With this paper I hope to encourage other scholars to think critically about the equestrian industries in their own countries.

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CONCLUSION

Studies of interspecies relations help unpack the complexities of society. The way we treat animals is a reflection of the way we treat other humans. We have complicated relationships with animals. They are valued members of our families and things we 'use' for a variety of purposes. The institutionalized violence that we inflict on animals, through activities like hunting, culling of pure bred dogs that do not meet breed standards in the pet industry, and the promotion of some animals (such as deer) and extermination of other "pests" (such as groundhogs) on golf courses, can be compared to forms of institutional racism. Through studying interspecies relations, we can develop our understanding of concepts like gender, technology, relationships, and health and wellbeing. In this thesis, the focus is human-horse relations and the role of the horse in the context of equestrian sport.

Young female equestrians tend to romanticize the horse as a magical creature, and romanticize the relationship they have with horses (See: GHC, October 11th 2009; GHC, November 15th 2009). In the girl-horse relationship the horse often represents an enchanted being. It is a common myth that all little girls love horses. In fact, some girls do not have any interest in horses. But why do we assume that they do? Is it because we think girls are still trying to break free from limitations society places upon them? To answer this question, let us ask: why do little girls love horses? There are really two parts to this answer, but both reflect the social construction of gender and the ways in which society reinforces and encourages traditional forms of femininity. Initially, young girls are drawn to horses because they are surrounded by them. Any introductory sociology

text will testify that gender is a social construction; girls are socialized into loving the colour pink just as they are socialized into loving horses. Our society accepts and encourages little girls to love horses. From an early age they are introduced to horses as magical and enchanting creatures. Little girls talk to their friends about horses, they bond over horses. Their peers influence them to like, or in some cases dislike, horses. In Disney movies, horses are usually associated with the prince and, in some way, the horse helps save the day. Traditionally, it was the prince that girls dreamed about, but today it seems as though girls are more interested in the prince's horse then the prince. Recently I had a friend ask to bring her six year old daughter to see a pony I was riding. She said that her daughter loved horses and it would mean the world to her if she was able to ride a horse. When my friend and her daughter arrived at the farm I asked the daughter to guess which pony she would be riding. She immediately said "the white one." Her mother turned to me and explained that, in the movie *Frozen*, the main characters horse is white. Thus, she loves white horses. It was at that moment that I realized the pervasive extent to which little girls are socialized to love horses. The horses intrigued the six year old and she seemed to enjoy riding, but I do not think the experience was as magical as she had hoped. My helmet was too smelly and brushing the horse was a lot of work. But I have no doubt that this little girl will continue to love horses because society encourages her to do so. As outlined previously, there is a retail industry that is dedicated to ensuring that little girls continue to love horses.

Not all girls who love horses turn into equestrians, but for those that do make the jump from loving the figure of the horse to loving horseback riding (and all that is

involved), there are a number of reasons why amateur equestrian sport is dominated by women. Interviewees in this program of research outline that horses offer a sense of power and freedom. In this thesis, I found that freedom was one of the top reasons for participating in equestrian sport. Even today, women are socialized into believing and acting as though they are the 'weaker sex' and horses offer a chance to re-claim that lost power. Being able to interact and engage in joint action with a horse offers a sense of accomplishment; when we feel accomplished, we are empowered. Blogs and horse magazines talk about how the horse is a gateway to other worlds, perhaps a world where women are considered equally as or even more competent than their male counterparts. Finally, horses give young girls a common interest from which they can converse and develop bonds with likeminded horse girls. It provides these girls with a social world over which they can feel control. Horses are large, powerful, and arguably magical creatures, which is what retail and entertainment industries have drawn upon in the creation of the girl-horse relationship. The relationship between a girl and her horse might develop over years of working together but the relation between girls and horses is a product of childhood socialization that starts at birth.

Although many people love horses, the public perception of horseback riding is not as positive. If you asked one hundred people who have never participated in horseback riding to describe equestrian sport, among the things they would tell you would be that it is expensive, elitist, risky, and in some cases a form of animal cruelty. Although these are common perceptions of equestrian sport, horseback riding is much more complex then it appears, both as an activity and a social world. Although the world of

equestrian sport may be extremely expensive, it is not necessarily so. It can be elitist but, at the same time, it can also be a humble, welcoming, and supportive community of life-long friends who would go to great lengths to help each other in times of need. It can be risky but most equestrians describe it as exciting rather than risky. It is possible that it is a form of animal cruelty, but equestrians will tell you the horse enjoys doing it.

So, is the public perception of equestrian sport correct? And, if it is, should youth participate in horseback riding, or for that matter should anyone? Truthfully, the answer might be no. Buchanan and Dann (2006) studied equestrian participation among female horseback riders and found that individuals self-identified as either athletes or hobbyists. They examined barriers to involvement in equestrian sport and found that for both athletes and hobbyists cost was the most commonly identified barrier. However, cost, along with work commitments was a more significant factor for athletes than hobbyists. Although this thesis focuses on youth female equestrians who are not as likely to face work commitment barriers, Buchanan and Dann's (2006) research brings to our attention that all equestrians may be restricted by the financial and time commitments required to participate in the sport.

Among those who are able to participate in the sport, young equestrians learn responsibility, are provided a sense of freedom, and are empowered through their built accomplishments, but it is possible they could achieve these things in other sports or other aspects of their lives. Equestrian sport is becoming increasingly commodified and there are fewer opportunities for riders to participate in a range of disciplines because they are being encouraged to specialize early in their riding careers. The research presented in this

thesis suggests that the industry has become more compartmentalized, business like, self-interested, and competitive. Modernity has changed equestrian sport and the horse industry, but it has also changed the horse.

The horse now holds a unique place in society. Where it was once a form of functional livestock (Gilbert & Gillett, 2012), it is now more commonly treated as a companion species. When people think of companion species, they think of 'pets', traditionally dogs and cats. However, the term 'pet' implies ownership and in the current societal conditions it is not an accurate representation of the human-animal relationship. The companion species is an animal that often has an intimate relationship with a human and they also have a role in that relationship. To use Harraway's term, they are a 'value-added' species. For instance, the sport pony is a type of pony that was bred in Canada, following its introduction in Europe, for its physical appearance, athletic ability, and temperament (Gilbert & Gillett, 2012). The breeding of the sport pony marked a shift in horse breeding practices away from an ascribed status bloodlines breeding approach towards an achieved status performance breeding approach. Any pony, regardless of bloodlines, could be classified as a sport pony and would be ranked based on the inspection of their physical appearance, temperament, and athletic ability (Gilbert & Gillett, 2012). An important part of the relationship we now have with animals is that their value is a reflection of the relationships we form with them. The sport pony that proves itself as safe for a child, that can win in a competition ring, and that can stay healthy and sound while doing so is more valuable than a pony that a child fears; they are a value added species.

We can identify the companion animal as both independent from us and connected to us in a way we never have been able to do previously. It occupies a unique place in society and may serve as a means for dealing with the risk society. In studies of health, scholars have argued we need to decenter the human and examine how human, animal, and environment are interconnected and collectively influence health. I argue that companion animals are both connected to us and independent from us, and this logic requires both a decentering of the human in the human-animal relationship and also a recognition of the interconnectedness of species and the environment. So, why or in what way are animals a means of dealing with the risk society?

Before the risk society, people were somewhat naïve to the potential risk into which they were putting themselves; there was more emphasis on chance and unpredictability. In the risk society, individuals are more aware of the implications of their actions and there is an onus on the individual to take control of their fate. The companion animal may act as a means of distancing responsibility from the individual. As an active participant in the human-animal relationship, the animal can share responsibility for what happens to the pair. For instance, when an equestrian and their horse complete a jumping course at a competition, and the rider then explains the round to their coach, the conversation might sound something like: "we had a good round, he really took charge through the outside line and jumped it beautifully. I had to hold him back a bit going to the red oxer, but it worked out." One does not have to be familiar with equestrian terminology to understand that the horse in this example is perceived as an active participant in the human-animal relationship, capable of thinking and reasoning.

This understanding of horses and animals as social agents is a characteristic of modernity and contemporary society but there is no definitive classification for it. What do you call animals that are not simply labourers but also not only pets? One possibility would be to use the 'companion animals' classification, but the roles and responsibilities of a companion animal versus a pet or farm animal are unclear. We do not currently have a classification for these modern animals but they have significant roles in our society. From therapy to daily interactions, the companion species in the risk society is a value-added species because of its ability to foster trust and encourage advancement. Returning to the sport pony, the selling features of a sport pony are that it is athletic enough to compete in high level competition and win, but it has a desirable temperament that makes it a good mount for children. Parents can trust that their child will be safe on the pony and can be confident that their child will win in the show ring. Arguably, whether the child is a good rider and learns the necessary riding skills is less important than staying safe and winning, but this notion reflects the impact of neo-liberal economic logic and the conditions of a risk society. In a society that is individualized, privatized, and commodified, the horse is a source of trust that eases anxiety. At the same time, it is also a scapegoat when something goes wrong. The horse is a means of mitigating risk to the individual.

In the three papers that make up this thesis I have explored the relationship between human and horse in the context of sport, recreation, and leisure. I have examined the horse stable as a social space, analyzed trust as a multidimensional concept (which in equestrian sport is a combination of interpersonal trust and social system trust), and I

have studied changes in equestrian sport as they have occurred over time. I have drawn on the theoretical work of George Herbert Mead, Niklas Luhman, Donna Harraway, and Pierre Bourdieu and have situated my analysis within the human-animal studies/equine studies and sport sociology literature. This thesis represents three ways of studying female youth participation in equestrian sport from a sociological perspective. Interdisciplinary fields such as equine studies are excellent sites for cross collaboration and innovative work. In my time as a researcher studying human-animal relations, and more specifically human-horse relations, I have met and worked with scholars from all over the world who come from a variety of different academic backgrounds. Sociology, as used throughout this thesis, gives the study of human-horse relations a focus and acts as a methodological and theoretical guide. The papers that have been presented here contribute to sociology, sociology of sport, and equine studies.

PAPER ONE

I begin in paper one, *Young Equestrians: The Horse Stable as a Cultural Space*, with an examination of the role and function of the horse stable in the lives of female youth equestrians. I ask: what does equestrian sport offer young equestrians? This first paper is interested in the experiences of females who participate in equestrian sport and the processes that shape their experiences. Drawing on the work of Pierre Bourdieu and Donna Harraway, I argue that the horse stable is a unique social space - a natureculture - where young girls are able to engage in manual labour, caring and nurturing practices, and physical activity and sport. Girls who participate in a horse stable engage in physical forms of labour such as shoveling, mucking stalls, sweeping, moving and stacking hay

bales, and so on. These girls are also encouraged to clean, nurture, and care for horses and other animals in feminine ways. The horse stable is both a private and a public space that allows young female equestrians to engage in traditionally masculine and feminine tasks. Within the context of a stable that is neither entirely influenced by culture nor by nature, female youth equestrians are able to develop a unique gender identity. Young equestrians who participate in horse stables are empowered and build achievements, they learn responsibility, and experience a sense of freedom. The horse stable and equestrian sport can help young females establish feelings of self-competency, self-actualization, and identity formation.

This paper makes several contributions to sociology, sociology of sport, and equine studies. Firstly, it argues that we need to move beyond sociological dualisms and understand that concepts such as nature and culture are inherently linked. It demonstrates that conditions we perceive as natural are not entirely natural; they are in some way influenced by culture. At the same time, conditions that we perceive as cultural do possess some natural elements.

Secondly, it contributes to the growing field of equine studies by providing a look at how individuals perceive their youth sporting experiences when they are asked about them years later. Many of the interviewees in this study had left Pony Club at the time of their interview; some had even left equestrian sport altogether. However, each had a generally positive recollection of their experiences in Pony Club and in equestrian sport. As discussed previously, it is possible that their accounts are romanticized versions of the truth but, even if that is the case, why do they recall their experiences so fondly? Former

equestrians were able to articulate the positive experiences they had in Pony Club and equestrian sport and were able to identify what they gained from these experiences (e.g. freedom, responsibility, accomplishments). This type of research which identifies the benefits of, or at least the perceived benefits of, participation in equestrian sport, is important to developing sociological equine studies. This paper aids in building a more coherent understanding of sport and equestrian sport by filling in areas of inquiry that have not yet been examined. It contributes to a currently small collection of academic literature on Canadian equestrian sport.

Thirdly, this paper provides a more detailed understanding of gendered identities in sport. It explores how femininity is constructed through an analysis of social spaces. Each social space in which individuals participate is important to shaping their personal identity. In this case, the horse stable is a place where young amateur equestrians (who are primarily female) develop their identity. Participation in the horse stable means partaking in both masculine and feminine tasks. Through the process of being actively involved in the horse stable, young equestrians develop a range of femininities, some more traditionally feminine then others. Thus, social spaces such as a horse stable can impact gender constructions and youth development. Other sporting spaces include hockey arenas, basketball gyms, and football stadiums, all of which are spaces where young athletes spend a considerable amount of time. The naturecultures of these spaces influence the type of athlete and type of person that emerges from such environments. Research has yet to explore these sporting spaces as naturecultures but, in general, we can contrast them to equestrian sport. For instance, ice hockey is primarily a male sport

(although efforts are being made to grow youth female programs in Ontario, Canada (OWHA, 2014)) which promotes hegemonic masculinity. Amateur equestrian sport, however, is primarily a female sport which promotes a range of femininities and masculinities. An analysis of youth equestrian sport demonstrates that, within sport, there are hybrid spaces that promote a combination of masculine and feminine behaviours.

PAPER TWO

In paper two, *Trust in Equestrian Sport,* I explore what gives riders the confidence to engage in equestrian sport. This paper outlines trust as a multidimensional concept that makes participation in equestrian sport possible. I demonstrate that social system trust and interactional trust combine in equestrian sport to produce interspecies trust. This paper employs the theoretical perspectives of George Herbert Mead and Niklas Luhmann and explores the relationships between horse and rider as well as rider and organization. I introduce Mead's interactional trust as a form of trust that develops between human and horse through the process of engaging in joint action. I draw on Wipper's (2000) study of eventers who developed interactional trust with their horses for the purposes of competition. This form of trust is established through goal setting and training which situate the human-horse relationship within a sport community. The relationship is built out of a common bond and partnership between horse and human. I outline Luhmann's social system trust as a form of trust that develops when individuals learn to trust the organizations, people, and groups that collectively make up a social system within which they are engaging. For the purposes of this thesis, the social systems are the equine industry and, within the equine industry, the Pony Club. Interactional trust between horse

and rider, in combination with social system trust in the community or network of equestrian sport, results in interspecies trust; these conditions make competitive youth equestrian sport possible. The bonds and meaningful relationships that individuals build with horses encourage interactional trust. Social system trust provides the conditions through which equestrians can then train with their horses and work towards competitive goals. Social system trust is facilitated by communication and, in this case, communication through the equestrian industry allows for the dissemination of knowledge and mitigation of risk.

Considering interactional and social system trust as necessary for competitive youth equestrian sport, I argue that declining participation in the Canadian Pony Club may, in part, be a result of the organization's inability to foster social system trust in its participants. This paper contributes to sociology a more detailed and multifaceted view of trust.

Scholars have examined trust at micro levels and referred to it as interactional trust, they have also examined trust at meso and macro levels and referred to it as social system trust. This paper explores the possibility that trust, in certain contexts, might be developed through a combination of interactional trust and social system trust. It contributes to sociology a new perspective on trust that is understood here through an analysis of equestrian sport but may also develop in other contexts. It is possible that interactional trust and social system trust are important to sustained involvement in social institutions, in other sports, and other segments of society. For instance, in pairs skating, there may need to be the establishment of interactional trust between the partners

performing the routine and also a level of social system trust in the coaches, event organizers, facility keepers who that ensure the athletes will be safe while they are performing on the ice.

The combination of interactional trust and social system trust is not necessarily an equal contribution. Depending on the person, their social system, their equine partner, and the context within which they participate in equestrian sport, interactional trust may be more or less important than social system trust. For instance, social systems need consistent reinforcement in order to ensure that they maintain the trust of their participants. This means that coaches, barn managers, event organizers, and other equine industry stakeholders work collectively to ensure equestrians are able to trust the system within which they are competing. When an equestrian begins to lose their trust in a social system, they may look to other forms of social systems within the equestrian industry to supplement this trust, thus moving away from their original social system. We can look for patterns of engagement and disengagement as a reflection of trust in the organizations within which individual are competing. It is possible that other factors influence engagement and disengagement but it is also foreseeable that a healthy and productive social system would be able to ensure they maintain the trust of their participants. Applying this analysis to other sports may help to distinguish why people engage/disengage in particular sports. Is trust in social institutions a reason for involvement/disengagement? This analysis contributes a new perspective on trust that can be used to analyze the role of trust in various aspects of society.

PAPER THREE

In the final paper in this thesis, *Socio-Cultural Changes in Equestrian Sport,* I focus more specifically on the Canadian Pony Club then I have in either of the other papers, but I do so in order to use Pony Club as a reflection of the changes that have occurred in the Canadian equestrian industry, more specifically in Ontario, since 1934. I use the introduction of the Pony Club in Canada as a starting point because I see this as the period in which equestrian sport began to evolve. Before this time, there were hunt clubs, breed shows, and fall fairs, but there were no established equestrian circuits, at least not as we know them today. In the first few years there was massive expansion of Pony Club and the organization was the primary means of youth participation in equestrian sport until about the late 1960s. At this time, Canadian society as a whole began to change; from the late 1960s through to the early 1980s, Canadians began to approach sport and physical activity differently as they adopted neo-liberal economic logic. Traditional forms of sport, such as hunting and golf, were challenged by sports like endurance riding and skateboarding. New media and technology encouraged the consumption of sport as a spectacle and new opportunities for sport were introduced. In the Canadian equestrian industry, new disciplines and organizations were developed, encouraging the establishment of new competition circuits. In Ontario, organizations promoting the disciplines of dressage (CADORA), eventing (OHTA), and hunter/jumper (THJA) were introduced during this period. New equestrian sport venues in Ontario and Quebec were also introduced. There were obvious changes that developed in equestrian sport through this period of time.

This paper contributes a case study in equestrian sport to sociology, sport sociology, and equine studies. No previous research has examined the Pony Club or what is gained from participation in equestrian sport in Canada. This paper demonstrates that changes in equestrian sport in Canada have reflected changes in Canadian society and Canadian sport. Over the years, equestrian sport has become increasingly commodified, coaching has become a profession, organizing horse shows is now a business, and, in the last twenty-five years, there has been a movement away from the volunteer-based organization, the Pony Club. I argue that the Canadian Pony Club could not sustain its competitive edge as new organizations developed their own competitions. In sport, there has been a movement towards private forms of organized sport, and movement away from volunteer based sport, such as Pony Club. This late-modern shift has fostered the privatization of equestrian sport. Equestrians began to seek out more competitive equestrian pursuits and a greater number of competitions, paying more to participate in what was considered a higher standard of competition. The value of Pony Club as a youth equestrian sport organization has diminished. The equine industry has become increasingly commodified and individuals with very little horse knowledge are able to excel in this new horse industry. Using Bourdieu's analysis of capital, I outline that, although the Pony Club was once a means of building social and cultural capital, its ability to build cultural capital through competition has declined over the last twenty years. The Pony Club is still able to encourage the development of cultural capital through education and training but there is now a lack of competitive sporting opportunities available to Pony Clubbers. As a result, young riders are seeking out

additional avenues for competition. To the fields of sociology, sport sociology, and equine studies, this paper contributes an analysis of social processes that should be considered when examining other sports and segments of society.

In the next section, I highlight the overall contribution the three papers in this thesis make to sociology, sociology of sport, human-animal studies, and equine studies. Beyond the particular contributions each paper makes is a theoretical understanding of modernity and the risk society which has the ability to change the way we conceptualize contemporary society.

RISK SOCIETY

This research follows equestrian sport through modernity from a period following industrialization in the 1930s to the risk society that is characteristic of today. While explaining the transition from industrial society to risk society, Ulrich Beck (1992) outlines that, "we are therefore concerned no longer exclusively with making nature useful, or with releasing mankind from traditional constraints, but also and essentially with problems resulting from techno-economic developments itself" (p. 19). This sentiment is particularly important to understanding the contribution that this thesis makes.

The retrospective accounts of current and former Pony Club members and the documents and media that are used to inform the analysis in each of the three papers demonstrate that, in the early years, with industrialization and modernization, equestrian sport was built around making the horse useful in a new way. Traditionally, the horse was used as a form of manual labour. With industrialization, the function of the horse

began to change. Modernization created the recreational horse. New technologies provided new equipment such as saddles, bridles, boots (for the horse and rider), helmets, and so on. New economic developments also allowed competitions to grow. Larger competition venues were built, a profession of equestrian coaches was established, and, as a result of these techno-economic developments, the goal today is no longer to simply find a use for the horse.

In the risk society, the objective is to manage the use of horses in a way that is safe for all (including the horse). Managing, calculating, and maintaining safety to the best of our abilities is a quality of the risk society. But today, equestrians that work with horses actively acknowledge agency in horses. Many of the interviewees in this study described their horses in ways that demonstrated their character and identity as sentient beings. In the media, Canadian show jumping horses such as 'Big Ben' and 'Hickstead' (that have now died) are remembered for their for their athletic ability, their partnerships, and their personalities. In 2011 the National Post reported that Eric Lamaze, Hickstead's rider, described Hickstead as "a horse with some personality". A past groom described Hickstead as a "ferocious competitor" and said, "He was all fire in the ring. You could see it in his eyes, his desire to be better than anyone"(The Toronto Star, 2011). Some may call it anthropromorphism, but others will attest that horses have temperaments, dispositions, personalities and a character that is a reflection of their agency. The horse with agency is like any human athlete. A hockey player or basketball player is sold by one team and bought by another. It may appear as though human athletes have more

control over their decisions to play with particular teams then a horse would, but the horse could still refuse to compete if the team is not a good fit.

Typically the cost of purchasing Olympic and Grand Prix level horse ranges from about $150,000 to millions of Canadian dollars (Coulter, 2014). They are athletes, but also investments, accessories for demonstrating privilege and wealth, friends, and partners. Coulter (2014) explains, "horses are also "classed" through social constructions, practices, and hierarchies produced within equestrian culture" (p.137). Generally, a Hanoverian is worth more then a Shetland pony; a German Warmblood is worth more than a Hackney. Horses are sometimes bought as youngsters and are trained to be Olympic level athletes that compete locally, nationally, or internationally. They are owned by syndicates, by riders individually, or by corporations. Horses are used as a symbol of class, and when they are successful in the competition ring their value is socially constructed by the equestrian community (Coulter, 2014).

Equestrian sport, like hockey and basketball, was not always like this. There was a time when, before the commodification of the industry, riders could compete at an equestrian event on a horse that cost them very little money, and if they were good enough and they worked hard enough they may even make it to the Olympics one day. These times have changed, equestrian are still encouraged to work hard, but in reality equestrian sport is an economic industry and unless you have financial support (in some form) it is highly unlikely that you will ever ride at the Olympics. That does not mean you cannot participate in equestrian sport, organizations such as Pony Club offer less

expensive means of participating in the sport. But, without economic capital your opportunities for elite level competition are limited.

Class stratification has occurred through the development of multiple avenues for competitive equestrian sport. The research presented in the three papers that make up this thesis suggests that today each form of competition loosely represents a different socio-economic class. Paper three maps many of these changes as they have developed since 1934 and outlines how changes in Canadian society are reflected in the Canadian equestrian industry through a movement away from volunteer sports such as Pony Club. The analysis presented in this paper can be likened to Putnam's (2000) *Bowling Alone.* In this book, Putnam (2000) explains that, in the United States, the number of people who bowl in leagues has decreased over the last twenty years. However, the number of people who bowl alone (i.e. not in a league) has increased over the same period. The challenge he explains is that those individuals who are not bowling in groups are not engaging in the same social interactions and civic discussions that they may have been privy to had they participated in a league.

The same logic can be extended to equestrian sport in Canada as there has been a decline in Pony Club participation over the last twenty-five years; with this decline, equestrians may not be experiencing the same social interactions as they were in the past. Equestrians may be missing out on civic discussions that they would have been part of in the past. The movement away from Pony Club, as outlined in paper three, has resulted from the adoption of neo-liberal economic logic. The fact that there are less young equestrians participating in Pony Club means that there are fewer equestrians benefiting

from the social capital that Pony Club provides. Putnam (2000) explains that positive social capital leads to social trust and altruism, a broadening of one's self-definition from "I" to "we", and templates for problem solving. If this is the case, the movement away from the volunteer based Pony Club is a reflection of Putnam's argument that, in an individualized society (as he describes the United States), there has been a decline in social capital. The movement away from Pony Clubs towards more individualized forms of equestrian sport means an overall decline in social capital among Canadian equestrians. Extending Putnam's work, I argue that this move towards individualization is coupled with the movement towards neo-liberal economic logic.

Putnam (2000) identifies four reasons why there has been a decline in civil engagements in the United States. The first three - women entering the workforce, the growing mobility of families, and other demographic transformations such as the decline in marriages and the rise in divorce - are all explored but ultimately, he either rejects them or deems them too broad to analyze in full. The fourth reason - the transformation of leisure through technology into individualizing and privatizing forms of entertainment - is helpful when analyzing changes in sport, recreation, and leisure. Putnam (2000) focuses on television and virtual reality helmets as forms of individualizing leisure, but I argue that one can see parallels (although less drastic) in other forms of sport, recreation, and leisure. In equestrian sport, there has been a movement towards disciplines that are more individualized and away from disciplines, such as Pony Club, that require some form of social engagement.

Beck (1992) conceives of individualization "as the beginning of a *new mode of societalization,* a kind of 'metamorphosis' or 'categorical shift' in the relation between the individual and society" (p.127). Through individualization, people are isolated and forced to become self-reflexive of their life situations. Decisions that make up important aspects of a person's life, such as those regarding education, marriage, children, job, and place of residency, must be made; thus, the individual must become self-reflexive (Beck, 1992). In the past, when something happened to an individual, it could be seen as simply 'something that happened;' now events in an individual's life are seen as consequences of actions and decisions that were consciously made by that person (Beck, 1992). This has created the risk society and individuals are liable for their actions and must calculate the risks of their choices.

Participating in equestrian sport is, to a certain extent, putting oneself at risk of injury. In contemporary risk society, participants in equestrian sport are (at the very least) acutely aware of the risks they could be facing. In paper two of this thesis, I explore how individuals build the trust required in order to participate in competitive youth equestrian sport. I highlight that, at the institutional level, groups such as the Ontario Equestrian Federation (OEF) develop awareness and educational programs that promote the use of safety helmets while riding as a means of avoiding head injuries from falls. At the individual level, equestrians develop trust in the horse they are riding which helps them feel comfortable competing and progressing in the sport. It is not enough to trust the social system within which one is participating; one must also develop trust in their horse. I argue that it is the combination of social system trust and interpersonal trust that makes

participation in equestrian sport possible. The horse is a key component in the establishment of trust and it is possible that, more generally speaking, animals are an important tool in contemporary risk society.

In the risk society, relationships with animals can act as a means of minimizing the perception of risk. Developing the human-horse partnership makes the rider more confident in what they are doing and can ease nerves that might unsettle a horse. Developing their relationship, human and horse can become a hybrid entity through their newfound embodied relation. Animals may be a key component to understanding the risk society because, in a society that is characterized by individualism, we can learn from our relationships with animals. In paper one, I explained that the horse stable is a space where young female equestrians, through their experiences with horses, learn responsibility, build accomplishments, become empowered, and are able to escape the pressures of their lives. In a risk society, this feeling of escape should not be possible or should at least be extremely hard to achieve yet, in the horse stable, it is developed through the relationship the young girl builds with her horse.

Individualization is present in the social system but the human-animal relationship helps to transcend individuality and create opportunities for progress where one might otherwise be stifled. What studying the human-animal relationship ultimately teaches us is that we need to decentre the human in our analysis of society but also in our lives. By decentring the human, we allow for a more complete picture of society wherein we can consider human, animal, environmental, technological, and all the other components of society that impact our daily lives. In the papers presented in this thesis, we can see that a

neo-liberal economic logic has resulted from, and further encouraged, modernity and the development of a risk society, which in turn has been made possible by increased technological advancements and a movement towards individualization and privatization. Using human-animal relations as an inspiration from which we decentre the human, we can begin to understand how trust is formed on multiple levels (individual and social system) and used to overcome the 'risks' of progressing through competitive equestrian sport. At the same time, we can also use these relationships as a representation of how we can progress through a risk society in general. Finally, the movement away from volunteer organizations (such as Pony Club) is indicative of increased individualization and a risk society and results in fewer opportunities to accumulate social capital. Putnam (2000) argues that, without good sources of social capital, there will be a loss of social trust and altruism, a broadening of ones self-definition from "I" to "we", and fewer templates for problem solving. Human-animal studies scholars, however, have demonstrated that relations with animals can foster empathy (Daly & Suggs, 2010) and studies of animal assisted therapy have shown that human-animal interactions can teach problem solving skills (Kogan, Granger, Fitchett, Helmer & Young, 1999). Animals act as social support mechanisms when dealing with the tensions of a risk society. Therefore, in a risk society, the human-animal relationship may be more important to the development of a healthy society then we currently know.

FUTURE RESEARCH

In this final section, I outline four areas of research that scholars should examine in order to help build a sociological equine studies. I do not consider these areas

exhaustive, however, as there are areas such as violence and ethics, equine tourism, equine assisted therapy (or animal assisted therapy), and others which are growing areas of research, ripe for further development. I highlight the following four areas because they are important to me and to the future directions of the research that is presented in this thesis. I highlight the first three of these areas because they are gaps in the literature which appeared when I was doing my research for this thesis. The fourth builds upon the analysis presented in this thesis as an area that needs further exploration and it also represents the direction of my future research.

Firstly, this thesis outlines what is gained from participation in equestrian sport but I was unable to develop a clear demographic picture of Canadian equestrian sport participants. A limited number of Canadian equine industry studies (Coulter, 2013, 2014; Gilbert and Gillett, 2012) attempt to distinguish the participant but much more research is needed in this area. For instance, Coulter (2014) distinguishes the cost of leasing elite horses, and paying for training at elite levels, but less is known about how these costs vary across all disciplines of equestrian sport. Further, I was unable to determine how equestrians become involved, possibly because there is no one trajectory to involvement. I have drawn on Buchanan and Dann (2006) who studied motivations, barriers, and reasons for sustained involvement in equestrian sport but their research is on equestrians in Australia and may not be representative of the Canadian context. Future research would benefit from an examination of why and how individuals in Canadian equestrian sport choose particular disciplines in which to engage. Is it convenience, peer influences, the opportunity for reward, popularity, or are there entirely different reasons that someone

might pick a particular discipline? Some equestrians are involved because they love it as a sport and enjoy working with a horse for the purpose of competition. Others are interested in escaping from their lives. Finally, some people simply want to ride recreationally and have a relationship with a horse.

This thesis argues that there has been an increased commodification of equestrian sport but there are few industry or academic studies that detail the cost of participation in Canada (See: Coulter, 2013, 2014; Gilbert and Gillett, 2012). I argue that the equestrian industry is heterogeneous and it would be useful to develop a more detailed understanding of the social classes that participate in the sport. Equine Canada (2010) outlines that the median annual income for someone participating in equestrian sport is between $60,000 to $80,000. Although I think this is very likely close to being accurate, I would be interested to see whether this average is actually a bimodal distribution made up of an upper middle class and a lower middle class, and whether there is a group of individuals who participate in equestrian sport who are undoubtedly upper class?

Pony Club today is only one means of engaging in youth equestrian sport. When it was first introduced in Canada, it was one of the only youth equestrian sport opportunities. Today, there are a range of disciplines and organizations that are available to youth equestrians including, mounted games, eventing, hunter/jumper organizations, vaulting, driving, breed specific shows, endurance riding, and polo. This is important to recognize because, from the Canadian perspective, Pony Club is one of the most inexpensive ways to participate in youth equestrian sport; an analysis of this form of equestrian sport gives the impression that horseback riding in general is less exclusive

and more affordable then it may on average. Depending on the form, level, and place in which one engages in horseback riding, the financial investment that is required can vary significantly. The cost to participate in horseback riding would be low for someone who lives in a rural area, who is able to keep their horse or pony at home, and who has access to fields that they can grow hay on – perhaps less than $100 a month. In contrast, in areas adjacent to major cities like Toronto, Ontario, the cost to keep a horse or pony at an established equine facility can be over one thousand dollars a month in board alone. The analyses presented in the three papers that make up this thesis reflect the experiences of individuals who participated in Pony Club and cannot necessarily be imposed upon equestrians who compete in other equine disciplines. Scholars should explore the costs of participating in various disciplines in equestrian sport and how individuals become engaged in these different disciplines.

Secondly, the paper on trust in equestrian sport in this thesis has developed a unique analysis, but it leaves me wondering whether the trust that develops between human and horse is specific to that relationship. Perhaps similar forms of trust can be found between humans and other animals. The analysis presented above suggests that animals in general may be useful in mitigating and overcoming the tensions of a risk society but my primary research that leads me to this view is based upon the human-horse relationship. Future research should examine how interspecies trust in the context of human-horse relationships may be unique; and explore through comparison studies, how interspecies trust develops between different species of human-animal partnerships. Because we ride horses (and have a specific type of physical contact with them as a

consequence), it is possible that the interactional trust we form with horses is not the same as it might be with a dog, cat, or non-companion species. The equestrian industry is a community and it is possible that there are similar communities in dog and cat networks but it is unclear as to whether social system trust would be necessary for dog and cat owners. Is there less risk involved in the relationships we have with other animals? Can understanding trust as it develops in equestrian sport and through the human-horse relationship be used to develop our knowledge of other forms of human-animal relations?

Thirdly, in studies of human-horse relationships and equestrian sport, no research, to my knowledge, has engaged in international comparisons. This is an area that I think would improve our understanding of many topics related to sociological equine studies. Future research on human-animal relations, equestrian sport, and horse stables should explore how the shift from modernity to a risk society has evolved in other countries, if at all. Sociologists should ask whether Canada has a unique social and cultural history with regards to equestrian sport and whether other countries' equine industries experienced similar progressions towards neo-liberal economic logic? Do equestrian industries in other countries encourage the accumulation of social and cultural capital? Pony Clubs are represented in over thirty different countries - how does the Pony Club experience differ depending on the location? In recent years, literature on equestrian sport has seen considerable development but there are still substantial theoretical and methodological areas that would benefit from further examination. International comparisons of equine industries and the social worlds within the equine industry would benefit from an evaluation of different types of horse stable experiences. Research that has examined

youth participation in horse stables, thus far, has originated largely from Nordic countries (e.g. Nikku, 2005; Ojanen, 2012); it would be interesting to see the similarities and differences of horse stable naturecultures around the world. It would also be valuable to know whether the form of interspecies trust that evolves among Canadian equestrians may be culturally specific. Future research should explore how equestrians trust their equine communities in different parts of the world. In speculation, I would suggest that interactional trust between horse and rider is probably fairly similar regardless of country or place but social system trust is more likely to vary depending on the place. For instance, in South Africa, it is very common for all equestrians to have full-time grooms for their horses and therefore the groom is likely an important contributor to the establishment of social system trust. The rider may have weaker interactional trust with their horse but stronger social system trust with their equine community. Interspecies trust is not necessarily dependent upon an even coupling of interactional trust and social system trust. Further, federal and provincial Canadian equestrian organizations provide education and resources that help riders trust the sport as a whole. The Ontario Equestrian Federation provides information and resources on helmet safety, stable safety, and horse show safety (OEF, 2013). Future research would benefit from developing a more detailed understanding of these programs and resources as well as the programs that may exist in other countries. It would be useful to know how the programs and resources that are promoted by provincial and national equestrian organizations influence social system trust in the equine industry.

Fourthly, in the introduction of this thesis, I outlined how I came to this research by studying various aspects of the Canadian equine industry. I engaged in planning and organizing sessions and presenting at conferences on human-animal relations, and networked with scholars from around the world. I conclude by outlining that, moving forward, I plan to continue my scholarship in this field by examining topics such as helmet safety in equestrian sport. Through the process of researching trust in equestrian sport, it became evident to me that many equestrians put themselves in what I consider "risky situations" by not wearing safety helmets when riding their horse. The notion of risk in equestrian sport is interesting because equestrians seem to be comforted by their relationship with their horse wherein they feel they are less at risk of injury. Against this backdrop, there are valid questions regarding how stable owners and equestrian organizations can encourage or convince equestrians that they need to wear safety helmets. How can we explain equestrian reluctance to wear them? Sport medicine and public health scholars have studied safety helmet use in equestrian sport, but there has been no sociological examination of why some equestrians do not wear helmets. How has the risk society and individualization shaped the way we perceive risk in sport? Why, when other sports are using more and more preventative equipment, are equestrians using less? Is there a 'type' of equestrian that is more likely not to wear a helmet? What educational campaigns and/or initiatives are used in Canada to promote safety helmet use?

The papers in this thesis demonstrate that equestrian sport and the relationships individuals form with horses are complex. In a society where people are individualized

by technology and stifled by potential risks, the horse is a means of achieving freedom, it is something they can develop trust in, and potentially, it is an aid in surviving the risk society. I encourage sociologists and scholars from all disciplines to examine how changes in society are reflected in the activities we engage in, the communities we are part of, and the relationships that we hold. Understanding the horse-human relationship has taught me about society and I encourage others to engage in a sociological equine studies and build this field for sociology, sociology of sport, human-animal relations, equine studies and all the interdisciplinary scholars that engage in this research.

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