NO PILOT ON BOARD, JUST A WOMAN:
Sexual Harassment Experiences of Canadian Women Pilots

by

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B.S.W., University of Victoria, 1992

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

in the Faculty of Human and Social Development

We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard

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ABSTRACT

This study focusses on the sexual harassment experiences of women pilots in Canada. Most of the sexual harassment research to date has focussed on the incidence and nature of harassing behaviours, rather than the personal lived experiences of the women who have been harassed. Studies to date on women who have been harassed in male-dominated occupations have focussed primarily on blue collar workers. There has been very little exploration of sexual harassment of women aircraft pilots.

Using feminist interview research methodoloy, I interviewed six women pilots in depth about their experiences in the workplace. The participants were women who have been employed in Canada in a variety of flying roles, including airline pilot, charter pilot, bush pilot, flight instructor, and military pilot.

The participants' stories were analyzed and the data organized into themes. This analysis was informed by feminist thinking. In particular, concepts related to occupational power, sex role deviancy and the organizational context of the aviation workplace were explored. The themes that emerged are interwoven, revealing that sexual harassment of women pilots involves a complicated and inter-related set of behaviours that extend beyond those discussed in the literature about female blue collar workers.

Findings show that the participants work within an environment that is hostile, in which they receive messages that they are invading an elite male domain and are unwanted. Portrayed as sex role deviates and token women pilots, they experienced a wide range of hurtful and demeaning harassing behaviours. They experienced an erosion of their sense of self, and became overburdened with the struggle for acceptance

while having to simultaneously perform their flying duties. The aviation industry is hierarchal and emphasizes status. Pilots derive occupational power from society's perception of their role as prestigious, complex and mysterious. Women who assume this role are a threat to this occupational male power. This study reveals how the unique characteristics and organizational context of the aviation industry are conducive to harassing behaviours, thus complicating the issue of sexual harassment for women pilots. Implications for the industry and areas for further research are discussed.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis is the culmination of my return to school in my later mid-life years, and evolved through the efforts of many people. I am indebted to the six courageous women pilots who entrusted me with their stories. I honour your courage and wisdom, and wish to acknowledge the other women pilots who yearned to share their stories, but felt it was not safe to break the silence.

I acknowledge my thesis supervisor, Professor Barbara Whittington who, ever since I appeared in one of her undergraduate courses, has nurtured my growth and validated my work. She has generously shared her expertise in sexual harassment issues, and used her remarkable networking skills to identify resources and opportunities that I could not have accessed on my own. Her insights, flexibility, and sense of humour have been invaluable. She intuitively knew when I needed encouragement, and believed in me, even when I didn't believe in myself.

I appreciate the warmth and enthusiasm of Dr. Marilyn Callahan, an important member of my committee, whose clarity of thought and vision were extremely beneficial to my research process. An outstanding feminist mentor, she insisted that I trust my own thinking, and encouraged me to be imaginative and creative. Most importantly, she inspired me to carry on when I was at critical points in my journey and the barriers seemed overwhelming.

I have benefitted from being an undergraduate and graduate student of Dr. Brian Wharf, whose expertise and guidance I value. He made an important contribution to my thesis by challenging me to think critically about policy and practice issues, by validating my feminist ways of working, and pressing me to work diligently and imaginatively.

I am very grateful to Susan Trice whose sharp eye for detail and technical assistance greatly improved the presentation of my manuscript. She is a gifted computer troubleshooter and provided unflagging support

and friendship during my graduate coursework and thesis project.

My friend Barbara Clough, having travelled this journey before me, was able to offer her reassurance, encouragement and unfailing support. I am also indebted to Tricia Brown, a new friend, who believed in my project, and generously gave of her time and knowledge to persistently explore a wide range of resources, enabling me to make it to the finish line on time. It was reassuring to know that Barbara Egan was always in the office, willing to listen and provide friendly advice.

Sheila Devine has taught me a great deal. She continues to be a role model and mentor, challenging me to take risks while applauding my efforts, teaching me to navigate minefields, and reminding me to have fun. I also owe thanks to my friend Gail Dunn who believed in me, offered her home as a refuge and was always there when I needed her.

The support, mentoring and validation of friends and family were what made the difference in the long run. I could not have completed my undergraduate and graduate degrees without the support and encouragement of my sisters Kate and Elizabeth, and my mother. Elizabeth's belief in my project, and her willingness to serve as an intellectual and emotional sounding board were important to me. I appreciate the sacrifices and support of my grown children, Melanie, Steven and Murray. Murray provided logistical assistance for my research, and he and his partner Kerri, presented me with Trey, a beautiful grandson, while I was labouring in the final stages of studies.

I found it necessary, when the going got tough, to draw upon the incredible resilience of my deceased father, O. J. Wieben, a pioneer bush pilot, who not only taught me to fly, but also taught me that it is alright to rest awhile, if I must, but never to quit. Finally, I also give thanks to the staff and colleagues in the School of Social Work, and many others in my support network who created a circle of care that inspired me to persevere, and eventually to succeed.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my mother, Roberta Boyd Wieben who, daring to be different, learned to fly vintage aircraft over 50 years ago. An intelligent, caring and inspiring role model, she has always offered me unconditional love and support; and has keenly followed my pursuits. She encouraged me to pursue my dreams by sharing with me the stories about her mother, and the other incredible pioneer women in our past. By teaching me about their legacy of struggle and achievement, she has instilled in me the passion to persevere.

Chapter One: Introduction

Significance/Relevance of the Study

The initial impetus for this study came out of my own personal experiences gained while working in the aviation industry as a commercial pilot and operations manager. My female co-workers and I experienced varying degrees of sexual harassment while breaking into an industry that was neither welcoming nor supportive. We were isolated and frequently felt powerless in a traditionally male domain.

My earliest recalled experience of sexual harassment in aviation occurred when I was still a teenager. My father, who operated a bush airline and flying school, decided to enter an exhibit in the local trade show. He placed a two-seater Cessna 150 on display and asked my older sister (a licensed pilot) and me (a student pilot) to staff the exhibit, giving out information on flying opportunities. We were young and earnest, and serious about developing our flying careers. Two male trade show visitors approached us, and instead of discussing flying lessons, one pointed to my sister's blouse where she had her name tag, and said, "So you call this one Elizabeth...what do you call the other one?" We were embarrassed and humiliated, and I did not want to wear my name-tag (a requirement for all exhibitors) any longer. When I reflect back on this experience, I can see that it was an episode that I would now label sexual harassment. This incident was hurtful because it took the focus off us as women pilots and reduced us to sexual objects.

Further along in my flying career I experienced other episodes of sexual harassment, including being pinned against a wall of the hangar in a sexual manner and fearing I was about to be raped. I also had the experience of doing a forced landing in a remote northern area, with a male passenger on board. We were missing overnight during which time I stayed with him beside the aircraft, amidst thunder, lighting, and swarms of mosquitoes. I was also periodically using international

distress codes to signal for air search and rescue assistance. The next day, when we were found and airlifted to base camp (an event which had made the national television news because the pilot was a young woman), the male passenger proceeded to tell the press corps that he would be marrying me, since we had spent the night together--implying that sexual relations had taken place. In fact, I had spent the night dealing with my passenger's erratic and irrational behaviour. I was in fear of being killed because he was threatening me with the rifle from the survival kit. In addition to the above episodes, I worked for many years in a demeaning environment where posters of nude or scantily clad women were the accepted decor, and sexual leers and unwanted references to my personal sex life were commonplace.

As my aviation career progressed, I attended conferences of the Ninety-Nines, Inc., the International Organization of Women Pilots, and became a member of the international board of directors. This organization was started by 99 women pilots led by Amelia Earhart, who was the founding president. From conversations at these gatherings (pilots call it 'hangar flying'), I learned that my negative experiences were similar to the experiences of other women pilots throughout the world. At that time, sexual harassment was not a topic that appeared on any of the conference agendas. It was through 'woman to woman' talk that I learned I was not alone in my oppression.

Recently, a Canadian historian confirmed the experiences that we shared with each other. In an account of Canadian women pilots from 1928 to the present (Render, 1992), the author indicated that although she did not set out to write about discrimination, it soon became apparent that women pilots were adversely affected by male prejudice and that these women were engaged in a "persistent struggle to gain admittance and acceptance into the world of flight" (p. xii).

My experiences as an instructor of college-based programs such as Women into Trades and Technology (WITT) gave me the opportunity to

observe that other women who were training and/or working in a variety of male-dominated occupations were subjected to both unwanted sexual attention and conditions of employment that were sex-related, disempowering and offensive. Belonging to a network of WITT instructors, I learned that sexual harassment was viewed by my colleagues and their students as a serious and pervasive problem that hampered their ability to succeed in the trades and technologies.

My career developed in the direction of social policy work, as an educator/consultant in substance abuse, gender, and workplace issues for the aviation industry. In my travels to do this work, my interest in sexual harassment was further fuelled by discussions with female colleagues in aviation who told stories not only of harassment, but also of isolation and fear of reprisal if they reported incidents of sexual harassment. Those who had carried complaints forward spoke about the tremendous personal cost of doing so. They warned that women who work at men's jobs are residually defined as 'tokens' in a male-dominated environment and pay a big price if they complain about harassment.

Rising concerns about the sexual harassment of women have been reflected in the media, indicating that this study deals with an emerging and timely issue. Recent news media reports about women in traditionally male roles who complained of sexual harassment, but were not supported by their superiors, further served to highlight this problem for me. One of these reports involved several female staff-members at Canadian Forces Base Comox, one of whom filed a formal Canadian Human Rights Commission complaint. She alleged that she was threatened with a dishonourable discharge for insubordination as a result of attempting to carry a sexual harassment complaint forward within her workplace (Bell, 1992). In its annual report, the Canadian Human Rights Commission said that the largest group of sexual harassment complaints came from the Armed Forces where there is still widespread hostility toward women (York, 1993). This report indicated that under-

reporting of sexual harassment is prevalent in the male-dominated military system of Canada.

The other high-profile report was about the "Tailhook" incident involving the sexual harassment of 26 navy women by U.S. naval aviators while attending an official conference. U.S. Navy Secretary Lawrence Garrett III resigned his Washington post, accepting complete responsibility for a "leadership failure" that allowed the incident to happen (UPI, 1992).

The tracking of these and other recent news media reports about the sexual harassment of women in male-dominated occupations, coupled with the personal experiences of myself and my colleagues, served as a catalyst to launch this study. Scholarly awareness about sexual harassment has been developing since this phenomenon was first labelled in the mid seventies, and the literature review in Chapter Two of this thesis provides evidence that more work needs to be done on the ways in which sexual harassment is experienced by women in male-dominated workplaces. There is a gap in the literature with respect to the experience of women pilots, indicating that this study has the potential to make an important contribution to the existing body of knowledge.

Problem Statement

This study explores the sexual harassment experiences of six women pilots in Canada. Sexual harassment appears to be particularly problematic for women in male-dominated occupations (Backhouse & Cohen, 1978; Faludi, 1991; Kanter, 1976; Lafontaine & Tredeau, 1986; MacKinnon, 1979). Under-reporting of sexual harassment is an issue in occupations which are not male-dominated (Aggarwal, 1992; Davidson & Earnshaw, 1991; Gutek, 1985; Loy & Stewart, 1984). Due to the lack of a supportive group of peers, fear of reprisal, and other issues, responding to sexual harassment may be more difficult and complex for women in male-dominated

occupations. The organizational culture in a traditionally male work environment, isolation, and tokenism all play a role in this phenomenon.

Purpose and Context of the Study

Not many studies give voice to women's experiences of responding to sexual harassment. My goal was to shine a beam of light on the experiences of six women pilots. The major purpose of my study was to uncover the intricate and complex nature of the experience of women pilots in responding to sexual harassment in their male-dominated aviation work settings, so that we could develop a better understanding of their lived experience. The participants have worked in a variety of occupational roles, including airline pilot, charter pilot, flight instructor, bush pilot, and military pilot.

Sexual harassment appears to be particularly problematic for women employed in male-dominated occupations. For the purpose of this study, I am using the term 'male-dominated occupations' to describe occupations in which the workforce is predominantly male, and in which men control the power by occupying the majority of the senior positions. Other descriptors used in the literature for this type of workplace include traditional male occupations and non-traditional occupations. Women who are moving into occupations which have been historically all-male find that they--even more than other women--are targets of extreme and concerted forms of sexual harassment. These women are considered unwelcome because they are viewed as threatening to the men; thus ostracism, hazing, threats and sexual harassment are some of the techniques used to keep such women 'in their place' (Backhouse & Cohen, 1978).

Given the current depressed state of the aviation industry, which has made the job market for pilots even more competitive, it seems reasonable to assume that this perception of women as an economic threat

is increasing, especially in an occupation where men have enjoyed privilege and dominance.

Objectives and Research Questions

The objectives of this study were: (a) to find out about the participants' experiences of sexual harassment in the workplace, (b) to learn how participants' responses to sexual harassment had been influenced by the unique characteristics of a male-dominated aviation workplace, and (c) to develop an understanding of the factors which influenced the participants' responses to sexual harassment.

Specific research questions for this study were as follows:

1. What are the sexual harassment experiences of the participants?
2. How do the participants respond to incidents of sexual harassment in the workplace?
3. What are the experiences of those participants who attempt to carry a sexual harassment complaint forward?
4. What is the impact on the participants who choose not to complain about an incident of sexual harassment?
5. What are the participants' perceptions about the characteristics of their aviation workplace that affect their response to sexual harassment?

Researcher's Values, Beliefs and Experiences

In conducting this study, I attempted to develop a special understanding of the ways in which women pilots respond to sexual harassment, by focusing attention on the perceptions and experiences of the participants. I did this work based on the assumption that people make sense out of their experiences and create their own reality (Locke, Spirduso, & Silverman, 1987). As the investigator, I was the primary research instrument. My direct presence as part of the research process

meant that my values, beliefs, perceptions, assumptions and experiences became potentially relevant to all stages of the research process.

I did not strive to achieve objectivity, to erase my personal viewpoint, or to become neutral. I considered 'who I am' to be a valuable resource that I brought to this project. My task was to develop an awareness of what I brought to the study setting and to ensure that my personal attributes were used in a way that illuminated the data, rather than distorted it (Locke, et al., 1987). One strategy for achieving this was to record my 'conceptual baggage' at the start of the research. Documenting the conceptual baggage (thoughts and emotions) allowed me to determine, on an on-going basis, whether my assumptions or preconceived ideas were influencing the research (Kirby & McKenna, 1989).

Values and Beliefs

One of the values that I cherish is equity, or fairness. I have a strong sense of justice and believe we all deserve to live in a just society. In terms of this study, this means that I approached the research problem from a human rights perspective. The questions that I asked and the way in which I analyzed the data were influenced by this perspective. I believe strongly that every person has the right to work in an environment free of sexual harassment. This human rights perspective is what gave me the energy and drive to carry this project forward.

At the same time, I must acknowledge that this passion for the rights of others resulted in a range of feelings (including anger and powerlessness) when I heard the stories of participants whose rights had been infringed upon. One way of dealing with this dilemma was to keep a journal during my research in which I recorded my feelings, thoughts and personal reflections, apart from the data obtained during the interviews. Although not originally planned, I soon became aware that

in addition to the journal entries, I needed to participate in debriefing sessions with a colleague after the interviews.

I value every human being's intrinsic self-worth and right to self-determination. I believe that sexual harassment is a public issue, not a private trouble (Wharf, 1990). Because of this viewpoint, I tend to view planned change at a macro level, and therefore my research was influenced by my desire to link the personal experiences of the women pilots with organizational changes that might allow the problem to be alleviated in their workplaces.

I also believe that sexual harassment is not always intentional, rather that some men, due to their socialization, are unaware that their behaviour is unacceptable. This is the lens through which I developed the questions and viewed the data. At times I found myself seeking reinforcement for this viewpoint in the data. It was important for me to be constantly alert to this bias, and to take steps to ensure that I did not impose my own meanings onto the data. I have a strong belief that sexual harassment is about power, not sex, and this framework influenced the way I conducted the interviews and analyzed the data. It also influenced the ways I thought about implications for policy and practice.

In proposing this study, I assumed that women pilots are victims of sexual harassment and rarely complain about it due to the fear of reprisal, isolation, and lack of peer support, among other reasons. I am also aware that my assumptions and beliefs with respect to sexual harassment are influenced by the literature that I have read; I therefore set up my data collection and analysis records in a way that ensured that this prior knowledge was accounted for, so that it would not replace the data provided by the participants. This was done by using wide margins on the transcripts. Within these margins, I recorded the conceptual baggage (prior knowledge and experience) as it inserted itself into the process.

Experiences

My experience with the topic studied includes personal and professional experience in addition to exposure to the literature. As mentioned earlier, I have been a victim of sexual harassment in a male-dominated setting, and these disempowering experiences precipitated my interest in doing this study. These prior experiences of victimization allowed me to bring empathy and intuition into the research activities. Burns and Grove (1987) report that the use of the researcher's personality is a key factor in qualitative research, and that the skills of empathy and intuition are cultivated by researchers and deliberately used.

The setting for my study was the aviation workplace, and I have over 20 years of experience in this field of work as a commercial pilot and operations manager. This background was an asset in conducting the research. As an investigator, I possessed credibility which facilitated the carrying out of the study, including access to participants willing to talk about their personal experiences and potential acceptance of my findings by those who work in aviation. I must also acknowledge that my familiarity with the aviation world was, to a small degree, a drawback since I had to strive to remember that the reality of these women I was interviewing could be quite different from the reality that I experienced as a woman pilot. I needed to "bracket" this previous experience so that I could remain open to perceptions of the participants, rather than attaching my own meaning to their experiences (Burns & Grove, 1987).

I had to make provisions for self-monitoring at each stage of the study to control for the influence of my personal "being" during data-gathering and data analysis. In addition to keeping a journal to record my personal standpoint, I also enlisted the help of a colleague with whom to cross-check my perceptions and decisions. This person was in a position to challenge me on ways in which bias could creep into my work.

On the other hand, I recognized that the use of my personal qualities was a key asset in this qualitative study and that this type of research values subjectivity, rather than objectivity. My role was to acknowledge the complexities of close involvement with the participants of my study (Sandelowski, 1986).

The thesis unfolds as follows. In Chapter Two, I provide a review of the literature on sexual harassment in the workplace, including theoretical models that have been useful in my analysis. Chapter Two also provides a review of pertinent literature on the role of women in male-dominated occupations, and in the aviation industry. In Chapter Three, I discuss the research design, participants, data collection, data analysis and ethical considerations. Chapter Four is a presentation of my findings within the context of the literature. Finally, Chapter Five provides insights from the study, implications for the aviation industry, and recommendations for future inquiry.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

The purpose of reviewing the literature was to assist in developing useful concepts for the study and to assist in doing the data analysis. There is an overview of the literature in this chapter, and in Chapter Four the literature is incorporated into the discussion of the findings. I began with a preliminary review of the literature on sexual harassment in the workplace, including a look at theoretical models. I also reviewed how sexual harassment is operationally defined, the incidence and nature of sexual harassment, and the impact on victims.

Since I was unable to locate any literature on sexual harassment of women pilots, I reviewed the literature on women in male-dominated occupations, which provided me with an understanding of the experiences of women who are moving into occupations which have been historically all-male. I also took a look at what others had written about women's roles in the aviation industry to determine the general context in which women pilots do their work. Near the end of my project, I connected with a woman airline pilot who had conducted her own informal survey of her peers with respect to sexual harassment, and this is included in the section on women in aviation.

As I collected and analyzed my data, I revisited some aspects of the literature, particularly historical accounts of the roles of women in aviation that seemed to fit with the stories I was hearing from the participants, and articles on recent episodes of sexual harassment of women in male-dominated occupations other than aviation. Throughout the course of the analysis, I continued to read new literature which helped me to sustain my intellectual curiosity and to create a context for my findings.

Theoretical Perspectives

Reviewing theoretical perspectives was important in terms of developing concepts and for thinking about how we develop appropriate interventions, and of rethinking the way we develop policies and prevention strategies. The responses that individuals, organizations and governments will make to the sexual harassment problem--including policy development and implementation--are related to the way in which they conceptualize the problem. I assumed that no single theoretical approach would be likely to provide a comprehensive understanding of a complex phenomenon such as sexual harassment in the workplace; therefore, it seemed important to review a range of perspectives that might guide the research. The feminist and sex-role spillover models were most useful in developing concepts for this study. These theoretical perspectives also helped me to make sense of the findings as I revealed the settings in which women pilots work, the rules by which they structure their lives, and how they decide what to do when they are harassed (Oberg, 1988). In addition to these two models, this section provides a brief overview of the natural/biological, organizational, and socio-cultural models.

Feminist Perspective

Feminist theory provides a good theoretical basis for understanding sexual harassment, and there seems to be widespread support within the literature for the feminist perspective that sexual harassment is not about sex, but about power. Ten years after Millett (1970) and other early theorists began a lively tradition of discussing the political nature of the relationship between the sexes, two Canadian authors, Backhouse and Cohen (1978), asserted that sexual harassment serves as a reminder for women of their powerlessness--a status reminder. The workplace represents simply one additional arena in which men exercise their general and social/economic power (Livingston, 1982).

A feminist approach to sexual coercion includes an acknowledgement of a gender differential in power and of how these disparities in power affect all social interactions between men and women (Stock, 1991). Kanter (1976) points out that harassment behaviours involve the misuse of power and serve to reinforce the male position of dominance in organizations. Power is a component of cultural definitions of male and female sex role relationships (Loy & Stewart, 1984).

Other writers have used feminist analysis to conceptualize sexual harassment within the framework of the theory of patriarchy which was defined as a system of male privilege (Lafontaine & Tredeau, 1986). "The male role is invested with major control over significant personal and institutional resources including economic and sexual power" (p. 433). Lafontaine proposed that women in male-dominated occupations occupy a particularly problematic position with respect to male workers. Sexual harassment may be used to exclude women from male-dominated jobs.

The work of Hanmer and Maynard (1987) on gender and violence revealed the hierarchical nature of our society, where gender stratification is fundamental and violence (or threat of violence) plays a major role in the social control of women. These authors indicate that social control comes from individual men and through the institutionalisation of violence in a social structure dominated by men as a group.

In writing about the sexual violence against women, Hartsock (1985) said it is not a sexual act, but an act of domination and humiliation and a "conscious process of intimidation by which <u>all</u> men keep <u>all</u> women in a state of fear" (p. 165). In their work on sex at work, Hearn and Parkin (1987) concluded that sexuality is always political, in that it involves activity with power. They emphasized the place of power in the analyses of sexuality and organizational life.

MacKinnon (1979) developed an argument that sexual harassment in the workplace was more than a private trouble, but also a case of sex

discrimination in employment. In her work, she argued that sexual harassment refers to the unwanted sexual imposition of sexual requirements in the context of a relationship of unequal power. "Central to the concept is the use of power derived from one social sphere to lever benefits or impose deprivations in another," said MacKinnon. She argued that American society legitimizes male sexual dominance of women and employer's control of workers. MacKinnon found the existence of sexual harassment in the workplace comes as no surprise, given the pervasiveness of male sexual dominance as a whole (Lafontaine & Tredeau, 1986).

According to Gutek (1985) a feminist perspective views sexual harassment as a power relationship, male over female, constituting economic coercion and asserting the woman's sex role over her work role, reflecting the status of women in our society. "The feminist perspective considers social changes necessary to eliminate sexual harassment" (p. 9).

Sex-role Spillover Model

Gutek and Morasch (1982) proposed a more specific feminist model that emphasizes the effects of sex-role spillover in an organizational context (Stockdale, 1991). It was expanded by Gutek in 1985. This model refers to the carryover into the workplace of gender-based roles that are usually irrelevant or inappropriate for work. Gutek argues that sex segregation of work calls attention to the gender and facilitates sex-role spillover: the assumption that people in particular jobs, and the jobs themselves, have the characteristics of only one gender. This results in the activation of gender beliefs and expectations which affect male/female interaction. Gutek (1985) reports that women in male-dominated jobs who are seen as 'role deviates' report more sexual harassment than women in traditionally female jobs, due to sex-role spillover. The nature of the sex role and the work role is incongruent for the non-traditionally employed woman:

> When the numerically dominant men expect a non-traditionally employed woman to behave in accordance with their primary conception of her--that is, a woman, rather than a worker, and behave toward her in accordance with that primary conception, such behaviour is often inconsistent with what the expectation would be if it were based on work role. (p. 133)

Gutek and Morasch (1982) argued that women in female-dominated work will experience a different kind of sex-role spillover since their work role parallels their sex role (Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987). Davidson (1991) states that societal sex-role attitudes and behaviours are hypothesized to be more likely to carry over into the workplace when women are in the minority in an organization, possibly contributing to higher rates of sexual harassment for such women.

Licata and Popovich (1987) used role theory interwoven with feminism to explain sexual harassment as a function of work-role expectations in the organizational setting. Like Gutek, they proposed that sexual harassment is a role problem that can occur when sex-role stereotypes are transferred to the workplace and an individual's expectations of another's sex role are confused with his/her expectations of the individual's work role.

A major advantage of the sex-role spillover approach is that it focuses attention on the workplace and its environment, which may offer a more realistic arena for change than the societal changes required of the feminist approach (Stockdale, 1991).

Other Models

Tangri (1982) proposed three alternative models of sexual harassment: the natural/biological model, the organizational model and the socio-cultural model.

Natural/biological model. The natural/biological model argues that what has been called sexual harassment is, in reality, natural sexual attraction between the sexes. Harassing behaviour is not meant nor intended to be offensive, but is merely the logical result of biological urges, possibly reflecting men's stronger sex drive. The problem with this model is that it assumes a stronger sex drive in men,

and could be used to blame the victim for being too attractive, or dressing inappropriately, thus inviting the unwelcome behaviour. The problem with this approach is it allows management to focus on protecting the reputation of the high-status harasser while putting the blame on the victim (Gutek, 1985). The natural/biological model has also been described as simplistic (Davidson & Earnshaw, 1991).

Organizational model. The organizational model argues that sexual harassment is the result of certain opportunity structures created by an organizational climate, hierarchy, and specific authority relations (Tangri, et al., 1982). "Since work organizations are characterized by the vertical stratification, individuals can use their power and position to extort sexual gratification from their subordinates" (p. 37).

Loy (1984) addressed organizational aspects of sexual harassment, arguing that because most women are in subordinate positions in work settings, culturally-defined sex role expectations and workplace authority gives males both a culturally and organizationally advantaged position, thus increasing the opportunity for an abuse of power. This abuse would be based on the interaction of organizational authority and gender stratification. She concluded that sexual harassment in the workplace functions as an attempt to apply the power differentials associated with sex roles and with organizational position. Tangri (1982) stated that within the organizational model, the ratio of males to females can facilitate or inhibit sexual harassment. The greater visibility of 'tokens' and their 'newcomer' status may make them scapegoats for the dominant group's frustration. This has implications for women in male-dominated jobs.

Kanter (1976) wrote about the impact of hierarchical structures on the work behaviours of men and women. She argued that work attitudes and behaviour are a function of location in the organizational structures, and not one of sex differences. Kanter's work proposed that

in hierarchal systems such as large corporations, the relative disadvantage of many women with respect to opportunity and power results in behaviours and attitudes that are also true of men in similarly disadvantaged situations. It is the organization, and not the gender, that is influential.

Socio-cultural model. The third model explored by Tangri (1982) is the socio-cultural model, which asserts that sexual harassment is only one manifestation of the larger patriarchal system in which men are the dominant group. According to this model, "male dominance is maintained by cultural patterns of male-female interaction as well as by economic and political superordinancy" (p. 40). Socialization is considered to be a factor in the model, resulting in men and women adopting sex roles of aggressiveness and acquiescence, respectively. This model is similar to the feminist analysis in that it views the function of sexual harassment to be the maintenance of male occupational dominance of women.

It has been acknowledged by other writers that socialization pressures and sex-role conditioning may lead some men to view sexual harassment as an acceptable socio-sexual behaviour (Davidson & Earnshaw, 1991). "These views may be reinforced to the extent that sexual harassment is seen as being instrumental in the preservation of men's position of greater status, power and economic well-being" (p. 182).

More work needs to be done on the theoretical framework for sexual harassment in the workplace. There are relatively few articles written on theories to explain the phenomenon as opposed to research data on its nature and incidence. Understanding the theoretical models is crucial and inextricably linked to the development of policy and practice. For the purpose of this study, the feminist, sex-role spillover, socio-cultural, and organizational models have been most useful in developing concepts and in the data analysis.

Defining the Problem

The definition of sexual harassment has evolved from the 'quid pro quo' concept of a condition attached to a tangible job benefit, to the broader concept of a hostile, offensive work environment (Paludi & Barickman, 1991), which is the definition used in this study. It is helpful to review the emergence of these definitions, as the issue of definition is fundamental to discussions of sexual harassment at work, and how to deal with it or how to prevent it. How the phenomenon is defined has significant implications for practice, grievance procedures, the policy process, and educational strategies.

Fitzgerald (1990) asserts that the development of a definition has been troubling:

> One of the most persistent and troubling problems in the sexual harassment literature has been the lack of a widely agreed upon definition of the concept, one that was broad enough to comprehend a variety of experiences to which the construct refers, and yet specific enough to be of practical use. (p. 21)

In 1975, the Working Women United Speak-Out defined sexual harassment as the treatment of women workers as sexual objects (Loy & Stewart, 1984).

There is evidence that the behaviour that an individual defines as sexual harassment depends on their gender, with women consistently defining more experiences as harassing than men (Gutek, 1985). Sexual touching is more likely to be considered sexual harassment by women than by men. "While complimentary compliments and suggestive remarks constitute sexual harassment for some individuals, for others, they do not" (Stockdale, 1991, p. 54).

In 1974, MacKinnon (1979) began a project to develop an argument that sexual harassment in the workplace constituted sex discrimination in employment, so that victims would be able to seek relief under the law. In doing so, she defined sexual harassment as the "unwanted imposition of sexual requirements in the context of a relationship of unequal power" (p. 1). She concluded that it could be a single encounter or a series of incidents at work. MacKinnon said that sexual

harassment "may place a sexual condition upon employment opportunities such as hiring and retention of advancement, or it may occur as a pervasive or continuing condition of the work environment" (p. 2). MacKinnon expressed the opinion that the behaviours would extend along a continuum of unwantedness.

Although earlier definitions were of the 'quid pro quo' type (sexual favours as conditions of employment), in the mid-1980s it was agreed by human rights councils and the courts that sexual harassment claims were not to be limited to those for which a tangible job benefit was withheld (quid pro quo), but also included those in which the complainant is subjected to an offensive, hostile or discriminatory work environment (Paludi & Barickman, 1991).

Definitions are implicit in some survey research where respondents are asked about a range of behaviours assumed to constitute harassment. Another type of definition (Fitzgerald, 1990) is developed empirically, by investigating what groups of individuals perceive sexual harassment to be under different circumstances. The range of behaviours may include comments, jokes, innuendos, sexually suggestive visuals, touching, assault and quid pro quo type of harassment, depending upon the list provided. Stockdale (1991) warns us that any externally generated definition ignores how the individuals themselves define the problem.

In 1987, the Supreme Court of Canada in Janzen v Platy Enterprises Ltd. said it viewed sexual harassment in the workplace broadly. It defined it as "the unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that detrimentally affects the work environment or leads to adverse job-related consequences for the victim of the harassment" (Aggarwal, 1992, p. 59). The Supreme Court went on to say it considered sexual harassment in the workplace to be an "abuse of both economic and sexual power, and a demeaning practice, that constituted a profound affront to the dignity of employees forced to endure it" (p. 59). This definition

links back to the feminist theoretical perspective discussed earlier, and has been used in this study.

It is obvious that the definition of sexual harassment in the workplace has evolved to be much broader than it was originally, and has been influenced by theoretical statements, legal arguments and empirical work. Because sexual harassment is such a complex emotional and legal issue for both the harasser and the victim, disagreement over defining it is most likely to continue.

Incidence, Nature, and Victim Impact

Incidence

Reviewing the literature on the incidence of sexual harassment helped to establish the significance of the problem to be studied. It uncovered gaps in the literature, including the lack of statistics on the incidence of sexual harassment in the aviation industry. A review of the incidence also raised the issue of reporting rates, and revealed useful information related to under-reporting of sexual harassment and the barriers to reporting incidents, including fear of reprisal. This information was useful in guiding the research in terms of developing appropriate questions, and in establishing a framework within which to do the analysis when discussing which factors influence a woman's response to sexual harassment.

Awareness of sexual harassment has grown over the past decade (Aggarwal, 1992; Backhouse & Cohen, 1978; Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987; Fitzgerald, 1990; Hearn & Parkin, 1987; Lafontaine & Tredeau, 1986; Livingston, 1982; MacKinnon, 1979; Paludi & Barickman, 1991; Schroedel, 1985; Stockdale, 1991; Stringer, Remick, Salisbury, & Ginorio, 1990; Tangri, et al., 1982). There is a considerable body of research focused on establishing the scope of the problem. The incidence of the problem cannot necessarily be measured by the number of formal complaints because of under-reporting due to many reasons including fear of

reprisal and victims' perceptions that it would not help to complain (Aggarwal, 1992; Davidson & Earnshaw, 1991; Gutek, 1985; Loy & Stewart, 1984).

Estimates on the frequency of workplace sexual harassment vary, depending on many factors, including the definition used and method for selecting participants (Aggarwal, 1992; Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987; Stockdale, 1991). According to Whittington (1990, June), research on the incidence of sexual harassment is misleading and often reflects differences in the design of the research, or awareness levels of the people responding to the survey. For example, if people were asked simply if they had experienced sexual harassment, the incidence rate may be lower than if a list of examples of harassing behaviours were presented in the questionnaire. This is due to people recognizing that their own personal experiences are similar to those experiences defined as sexual harassment, and when they think about their workplace in those terms, they begin to recognize and report the more subtle forms of harassment in their everyday world. Most surveys show that between 42 and 53 percent of women report having experienced overt forms of sexual harassment (Aggarwal, 1992; Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987; Gutek, 1985; Stockdale, 1991). It is clear that sexual harassment is widespread, affecting many types of workplaces, and is a pervasive phenomenon.

Nature of the Harassment

A review of the nature of sexual harassment in the workplace helped to develop an understanding of the demographics of victims and harassers and the workplace dynamics that influence responses of victims. It revealed information on the types of harassment behaviours most frequently reported. This information was useful in developing interview questions and probes. It was also helpful in the analysis of the data when discussing the different ways in which women and men perceive sexual harassment in a male-dominated work environment, and how

hierarchical structures and tokenism influence a victim's response to sexual harassment.

More women than men experience sexual harassment, and a higher percentage of female victims than male victims experience the most severe forms of sexual harassment. The majority of harassers are male. The types of harassment most commonly reported are the less severe types (sexual remarks, suggestive looks, gestures, jokes) rather than the more serious forms which include pressure for dates or sexual favours, rape and assault (Gutek, 1985; Lafontaine & Tredeau, 1986; Tangri, et al., 1982).

Impact on the Victim

Several studies have documented the impact of sexual harassment on the victim, which may include a wide range of negative emotional, psychological, medical, social, interpersonal and work-related outcomes. Most victims report that they have experienced some form of distress due to the harassment, including nervousness, anxiety, anger, disgust, depression, sadness, and guilt. Some victims report physical health problems including insomnia, stomach problems, and weight loss. It is apparent that physical or emotional conditions of victims deteriorate after the harassment experience. In some studies it has been reported to be as low as 15 %, curiously in others it is as high as 75%. (Davidson & Earnshaw, 1991; Gutek, 1985; Loy & Stewart, 1984).

Sexual harassment can also lead to negative social and interpersonal outcomes. These include deterioration of relationships with men, marital problems, ostracism from co-workers and being labelled as troublemakers. These outcomes have been reported to affect 15 to 28 percent of victims (Gutek, 1985; Loy & Stewart, 1984; MacKinnon, 1979; Tangri, et al., 1982). Serious, more tangible work-related outcomes include being fired and quitting one's job, which affect between 2 and 15 percent of victims (Gutek, 1985; Loy & Stewart, 1984). There is evidence that victims of sexual harassment also experience lowered job

satisfaction, decreased motivation, feelings of distraction at work, and worsened feelings about going to work (Gutek, 1985; Loy & Stewart, 1984; Tangri, et al., 1982).

Clearly, sexual harassment affects the victims in a negative way on a personal level, and results in changed work-related attitudes, performance, and job security. The evidence in the literature shows that the impact of sexual harassment is serious in nature and extensive. It is possible to link these serious negative outcomes--that result in job loss and other material losses for female victims--to the feminist theoretical perspective in which it is believed that sexual harassment is a mechanism for men to protect their male positions of privilege.

Women in Male-Dominated Occupations

Male-dominated occupations include a variety of manual and technical occupations in which women comprise the minority of the workforce. These occupations include both blue collar and white collar work. Male dominance in such jobs has resulted from "deep-rooted cultural assumptions about women's lack of mechanical aptitude, and physical strength...and stereotypes among many employees and supervisors about the inability of a woman to do a man's job" (Walshok, 1981, p. 4). In the past, women who have chosen such occupations have been considered oddballs or "social oddities...and continue to be regarded with skepticism...finding themselves unwanted and often actively excluded from full participation" (p. XV).

Sexual harassment appears to be particularly problematic for women employed in male-dominated occupations. A review of this literature provided information on how tokenism, isolation, and lack of a peer support group might influence a woman's decision about responding to an incident of sexual harassment. For this study, this information was useful in developing the interview process and, during the data analysis, in developing understanding of the participants' experiences

in the male-dominated aviation world, thereby facilitating the discussion section of the study.

Women who are moving into occupations which have been historically all-male find that they, even more than other women, are targets of extreme and concerted forms of sexual harassment (Backhouse & Cohen, 1978). Gruber (1992) reports that there are costs attached to women's entry into traditionally male occupations, and that "these women report greater conflict with peers, more ostracism, and higher rates of sexual harassment" (p. 128). Faludi (1991) sheds some light on the reasons women are considered to be unwelcome, and on the techniques used to keep women in their place. Backlash to affirmative action programs may be a factor. In 1977, the U.S. Department of Labor found it necessary to implement regulations requiring construction companies to maintain a working environment "free of harassment, intimidation and coercion" (p. 43). Faludi states that "the backlash towards blue collar women intensified as the Reagan economy put more than a million blue collar men out of work, reduced wages and spread mounting fear" (p. 388). Women are considered to be unwelcome because they are viewed as threatening to the men; therefore ostracism, threats and sexual harassment are some of the techniques used to keep women 'in their place.'

MacKinnon (1979) theorized that due to sex segregation of jobs, women who work at male-dominated jobs are residually defined as 'tokens' and are defined on their jobs according to their gender, with sexuality being part of that definition. Gutek and Morasch (1982) agreed, stating that women who are employed in male-dominated occupations, in which they operate under a 'token' status, will be treated as role deviates: their sex will be salient, they will be treated differently, and are more likely to report sexual harassment. The theory of sex-role spillover is used to explain this behaviour, referring to the "carryover of gender-based expectations about behaviour into the workplace. Being a sex

object is one aspect of the female sex role" (Gutek, 1985, p. 128). Hemming (1985) writes that token women in male-dominated occupations are often seen to represent women in general. Therefore, their successes and failures are used to determine future opportunities for women coming after them: "Sexual harassment of token women confirms stereotypes concerning the unsuitability of women for responsible positions in traditionally male occupations" (p. 70). At the same time that a token woman is considered deviant, she is highly visible and must demonstrate competence in front of her peers. Deviant in occupying a male work role, she may be subject to pressure to change; continued deviance may result in rejection--conveyed both verbally and non-verbally--from her work group (p. 71). Not only do women in male-dominated work report more social-sexual behaviours, but they also are more likely to report that they had experienced negative consequences from sexual harassment. Twice as many women in male-dominated occupations had quit their jobs due to sexual harassment as had women in traditional jobs (Gutek & Morasch, 1982).

Kanter (1976) proposed that the sex ratio in a work group may stimulate the occurrence of sexual harassment. Davidson and Earnshaw (1991) reported that a recent survey of organizations found that formal sexual harassment complaint rates for organizations varied in accordance with the percentage of males in those organizations' workforces. The highest complaint rates were found in firms where the workforce was at least 75 percent male. Of course, this data needs to be interpreted with caution, as the prevalence of males may not have been the <u>cause</u> of the higher rate of reported incidents.

Lafontaine (1986) reported that in a survey (N=160) of women in male-dominated occupations, over 75 percent of the respondents reported experiencing at least one form of harassment as compared with approximately 50 percent generally cited for the population as a whole. This study seems to support the work of Tangri (1982), in which she

applied the organizational model to sexual harassment to show that ratios of males to females may facilitate or inhibit sexual harassment. Most of the literature on the topic of women in male-dominated workplaces refers to women in blue collar jobs, rather than to women who are engaged in professional (white collar) work. However, the blue collar work culture appears to be different. Braid (1994) argues that men in the blue collar workplace have always harassed each other, and that there is "a strong tradition of harassing the apprentice or rookie on the job. Harassment in the trades did not start when women came on the job" (p. 14). Walshok (1981) also identifies this 'outsider' issue with respect to blue collar employment:

> There are clearly problems in being a woman....What looms larger is the problem of being an outsider, the new kid on the block, the stranger who must both master her new context and be accepted into the new culture. (p.260)

Braid (1994) identifies another characteristic of blue collar environments. She refers to it as the "pack mentality" (p. 16). This occurs when men behave differently in the company of male co-workers than they do when they are alone with a female. Braid notes that "if you separate them, most of them will again become reasonably considerate individuals" and speculates that "perhaps it is an upbringing that stresses status and competitiveness" (p. 16). This group behaviour relates to men's unwillingness to speak out against sexual harassment. Often, through their silence, they appear to condone sexual harassment when it occurs in their presence. Thus, Braid insists that "harassment on the job will not end until individual men start speaking up" (p. 17).

Gruber (1992) conducted a study in which he looked at differences among non-traditional women who held jobs in blue collar versus white collar work. He compared construction workers with engineers. Gruber found that "a skewed occupational ratio, competition among cliques in the workplace and coworker envy towards others who are successful are correlates of harassment for both engineers and production workers" (p. 128). One of the costs of sexual harassment for both groups was a

lowered sense of self competence, while production workers experienced more stress due to harassment and engineers linked lower self esteem to their experience of being sexually harassed.

It is apparent from the literature that male-dominated work settings tend to alienate female workers, provide an increased risk of being sexually harassed, and create a culture in which it is especially problematic for women to respond to harassing episodes. More research needs to be done with respect to women in male-dominated workplaces who do white collar work.

Women in Aviation

Historical Perspectives

It is likely that the extent to which women are under-represented in an occupation may affect the incidence of sexual harassment (Davidson & Earnshaw, 1991). In doing a brief historical review of what it has been like for women to break into a man's world of flying, I learned that they are greatly under-represented and that prejudice, tokenism and isolation were common themes, all of which could influence how a woman pilot responds to sexual harassment. This information was useful in developing the interview questions and probes, and in the data analysis. Qualitative investigations are context-dependent; therefore, a review of this literature provided the context within which the participants' stories were analyzed. This information helped me as the researcher to account for why participants responded the way they did in terms of social structures, social interactions, and personal sense-making (Oberg, 1988).

In order to relate to what women pilots are experiencing today, it is helpful to develop an awareness of women's historical role in the world of aviation. In North America and elsewhere, women have been involved as fliers since the early 1900s. However, inequalities still exist: "For decades female aviators [have] had to defy social

prejudices despite achieving remarkable feats of skill and endurance" (Cadogan, 1992, p. 1). Amelia Earhart is perhaps the best known of our North American flying heroines. Few are aware that she was a nursing assistant and social worker prior to becoming involved in aviation. She spent the latter part of World War II as a nursing assistant in Toronto, before she gained her private pilot licence in 1922 and then entered social work. In 1928, "she was engaged in social work with immigrants at the Denison settlement house when she received the astounding invitation to fly the Atlantic as a passenger" (Moolman, 1981, p. 48). Earhart was to be a 'token woman', riding along with two male pilots on board a three-engine Fokker. Amy Phipps Guest, the aircraft owner and a wealthy Londoner, had intended to be on the flight herself. However, "her family strenuously objected and she agreed to withdraw on the condition that an American girl of the right image be found to take her place" (p. 41).

When the aircraft landed in Wales after a 20-hour flight, Earhart found she was a celebrity, in spite of having been only a passenger and photographer throughout the journey. Earhart made every effort to attribute the success of the journey to the skill of the male pilots: "she was not comfortable with this role and did not wish to be regarded as the star of the flight while the men in the cockpit were practically ignored" (Moolman, 1981, p. 52). Regardless of her embarrassment, the flight had made her famous and the result was a host of speaking engagements and employment offers. As Moolman puts it, "they had yanked Amelia Earhart out of social work and thrust her into the mainstream of aviation" (p. 54).

Of course Amelia Earhart went on to break many flying records; however, she also identified the barriers that women aspiring to be pilots were facing, and she became an activist for women's rights. Ware (1993) notes that:

> the break between her settlement work and her later public career may not be as abrupt as it appears at first glance. The

> techniques that she honed in social work and teaching...were put to good use once she became a public figure. (p. 46)

Furthermore, it has been said that "Amelia Earhart accomplished as much on the ground as she did in the air" (Sloate, 1990, p. 73). Earhart herself recognized the links between social work and her women's rights activities, although noting that "it may be a different kind of social work from that of a settlement" (p. 46).

In 1932, Earhart was part of a delegation to the White House to urge President Hoover to give women access to equality in all aspects of their lives. She told the president that, "I know from practical experience of the discriminations which confront women when they enter an occupation where men have priority in opportunity, advancement, and protection" (Ware, 1993, p. 124). In 1935, she accepted a faculty position at Purdue University where she became an advisor to female students and to the aviation department, which "gave her the opportunity to encourage young female students in careers that until then had been exclusively reserved for men" (Sloate, 1990, p. 77). Earhart remained outspoken about women's roles in aviation:

> She stressed the serious contribution they could make...and in time became a champion of women's rights in general. She did not want to see women either pampered or penalized, saying that "sex had been used for too long as a subterfuge". (Moolman, 1981, p. 55)

Earhart was also the founding president of the Ninety-Nines, Inc. an international organization of women pilots which gained its name from the 99 charter members who came together for comradeship and mutual support. This organization has since grown to over 6000 members worldwide. In summary, Amelia Earhart was "a lively and articulate, practising feminist" (Cadogan, 1992, p. 263).

In the 1930s, women pilots competed in air races, including the Women's Air Derby, the first cross-country race for women pilots. Twenty women competed, covering a course of 2800 miles in only eight days, flying from California to Cleveland (Moolman, 1981). Regarding the derby, "a survey of male opinion showed that women pilots were

considered too emotional, vain, inconstant and frivolous--hazards to themselves and to others" (p. 55). Fifteen of the original 20 starters completed the race in the face of great adversity including engine failures, high winds and illness (Moolman, 1981). However, there was one fatality:

> Public reaction was predictable. Fatalities in men's racing were seen as occupational hazards, but in women's racing they were signs of incompetence. 'Women Have Conclusively Proven They Cannot Fly', declared one headline. And there were demands for cancellation of the derby, which the race committee rejected. (p. 57)

Most of the women who flew in the 1930s found it difficult to be taken seriously if they wanted to fly for a living: "Despite their remarkable exploits, it was no easy matter for any of them to establish themselves in rewarding, long term careers. Success for women flyers came through dogged, individual determination" (Cadogan, 1992, p. 263).

During World War II, women were recruited as Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASPS) to ferry fighters and bombers from factories and airfields, to tow targets, to test aircraft and for many other non-combat flying duties. Similarly, "as pilots of the Air Transport Auxiliary in Britain, Canadian women were among those who ferried more than 90 types of aircraft to and from squadrons across the British Isles. Some flew into France, Holland and even Germany" (Dickie, 1993, p. 94). After the war, they found that equal opportunities in aviation were not available to women. Those "who had ferried planes...and who were determined to continue to fly afterwards, came up against a great deal of prejudice" (Cadogan, 1992, p. 222). Nor were WASPS assigned veterans' benefits by the U.S. Defense Department. For many years, their pleas to Congress fell on deaf ears, and "for all their bravery and commitment, the WASPS still had to battle red tape, jealous insinuations, and political pressure, a struggle that failed to win them the benefits of military status until 1977" (Verges, 1991, p. 1). They were finally awarded official honourable discharges and veteran status on November 23, 1977 (Keil, 1979).

By the 1950s, several women had become record-breakers in aviation, breaking the sound barrier and setting altitude, world speed, and distance records (Cadogan, 1992). However, "equal opportunities were far from being available and the Smithsonian Study in Air and Space...reported in 1990 that most women in aviation during the 1950s flew only recreationally" (p. 221). The famous Australian mercy pilot Nancy Bird described (in her 1961 autobiography) the attitude of the public towards women pilots as unprogressive (Cadogan, 1992). Even famous women pilots who had set records were not acceptable to some passengers: "give them Amy Johnson at the controls and they won't fly with her, but give them any youth with two rings of braid on his sleeve and they feel they're all right" (p. 222).

In the 1970s and 1980s, women were being employed as pilots of some--mostly smaller--airlines. When Transair of Winnipeg, Manitoba hired Rosella Bjornson in 1973, she became the first woman airline pilot in Canada and the first jet-qualified female first officer in North America. In response, some Transair pilots "were not enthusiastic...others were jealous of the publicity she received" (Render, 1992, p. 289). Bjornson endured resentment and intense scrutiny, and "the pressure on her was intense as everyone watched to see if she measured up. All of this meant that her achievement had a darker side" (p. 289).

Although most airlines now employ female pilots, their numbers are extremely limited. Women have been at a disadvantage with respect to opportunities for advanced training that will qualify them for higher level jobs. As Cadogan has pointed out, "many male pilots receive their training in the military which they can put to use afterwards in civil aviation careers, but until recently, women pilots could qualify for commercial licences only by spending large sums for private training" (1992, p. 262).

It was not until the 1970s that women gained some acceptance to fly within the military system. In 1974, six women earned wings in the U.S. Navy. The U.S. Army began to include women in flight training very soon afterwards (Cadogan, 1992). In 1979, Canada's Department of National Defence decided to open up a limited range of pilot jobs to women. In 1980, the first three Canadian women received their wings for operational flight duty, and in July 1987 it was announced that combat flying would be opened to women (Render, 1992). Canada was on its way to becoming the first country to allow women to fly combat in an operational role. In 1988, training on fighters began for women pilots. Canada became the first country in the world to employ female fighter pilots. "There was a great deal of pressure on the earliest [military] trainees who felt that if they were unsuccessful, the door might be closed in future for women," according to Cadogan (1992, p. 258). Render (1992) concurs. Life for Dee Brasseur, one of the first two female fighter pilots in Canada (and in the world), was not easy. Flying the aircraft was not her only challenge; "another pressure weighing heavily on her mind was that, if she failed, she would be letting down womankind" (p. 347). Many of the first women pilots in our military sensed considerable hostility. They didn't feel like they belonged and they often perceived criticism from "the eyes in the other seat" (p. 344).

Much has been achieved by women in aviation, but some prejudices and an overall inequality of flying opportunities for men and women still remain (Cadogan, 1992). While "a comparatively small but immensely dedicated and determined number of women have achieved personal flying triumphs and pushed the frontiers of aviation generally" (p. 262), it would appear that some men still view aviation as an elitist men's club where women don't belong. Cadogan (1992) points out how:

> unreasoned prejudice against women flyers still finds voice. A letter in November 1984 in the magazine Pilot is a depressing

> example...."Cannot the ladies leave entirely to the gentlemen one or two 'worlds'--and I plead for aviation to be one?" (p. 254)

In researching her account of the history of Canadian women pilots, Render (1992) discovered that flying was a man's prerogative, and most women pilots were adversely affected by male prejudice: "Discrimination is one of the most persistent themes. The story of these women is not one of dauntless deeds but rather of their persistent struggle to gain admittance" (p. xii).

Sexual Harassment of Women Pilots

During my review of the literature I was unable to find any studies on sexual harassment of women pilots. However, colleagues in the aviation industry informed me that a woman airline pilot in the U.S. had conducted an informal survey of members of the International Society of Women Airline Pilots (ISA). Through networking with women pilots, I was able to track down the coordinator of this project, Kathleen Wentworth, an attorney and a captain for a major U.S. airline. Wentworth proved to be a valuable contact. She has been diligently working within ISA and her own airline to increase awareness of sexual harassment and gender discrimination issues, and to develop strategies for change. We had been unaware of each other's projects. Since then, we have been mutually supportive, exchanging experiences and sharing resources. In a personal communication on July 24, 1994, Wentworth said her survey results had been an eye-opener for her, and that she had been personally very touched by many of the incidents shared by the women pilots whom she had surveyed. Many respondents, in addition to filling out the survey form, attached several pages of handwritten notes, telling their stories of harassment and discrimination. Wentworth told me that, "for some of the respondents it was the first time they had shared their experiences with anyone and it seemed cathartic for them to have their experiences validated." Some of the reports brought her to tears.

Wentworth's project, the ISA Survey on Gender Discrimination and Sexual Harassment, was intended to be an educational tool "to share our personal learning experiences with other women airline pilots" (Wentworth, 1994, p. 24) as well as to be an instrument for gathering data. From May 1993 through March 1994, 134 ISA members completed surveys. (This was a response rate of 33 percent.) The survey asked participants to identify incidents of gender discrimination and sexually oriented harassment. Participants were asked to report on the frequency of incidents encountered, and to identify particular incidents that they considered significant.

Wentworth (1994) found that "the majority of frequent incidents and significant incidents reported by ISA survey participants dealt with gender discrimination, rather than sexual harassment" (p. 24). Furthermore, "of the significant incidents reported, 55% were categorized as gender discrimination and 45% as sexually oriented harassment, with three surveys reporting no significant incidents. Sexual harassment incidents ranged from cockpit pornography to several instances of rape and attempted rape" (p. 25). Wentworth also found that sexual harassment is "very hard to prove, and difficult to distinguish from other forms of mistreatment" (p. 24). She reports that sharing experiences, coaching women in response techniques, and public educational strategies are favoured by the respondents as a way to combat sexual harassment.

Review of the literature has revealed that women pilots have historically experienced great difficulty in gaining acceptance into the world of flight. Ostracism, tokenism, and concerted efforts to discredit (or ignore) their endeavours are interwoven into a theme of 'you don't belong here.' The struggle for acceptance has been an individual one, often fought in isolation. The women who have achieved success in the industry are survivors, having borne the double burden of fighting gender discrimination while developing a career in a

technically-demanding environment. Yet, outsiders have often viewed them as deviants or 'oddballs.' It is within this historical context that I began my exploration of the experiences of sexual harassment among today's Canadian women pilots.

Conclusion

A review of the literature has contributed to the development of concepts for conducting the study. While feminism emerged as the most useful perspective for my study, I also developed an awareness that no single theoretical perspective can adequately explain the complex phenomenon of sexual harassment in the workplace. This led me to incorporate other theoretical models into my study. The literature on definitions, incidence, nature and impact helped me to develop an appropriate interview guide and probes for data collection, and provided a context in which to situate the women's stories.

I learned that most studies to date have focused on the incidence and nature of harassing behaviours, with little written about the personal experiences of women who have been harassed, in terms of what their lived experience has been like in their everyday world. There is a need for more qualitative and interpretive research studies done in order to capture the essence of this very complex phenomenon that affects the lives of working women.

There appears to be insufficient work available on how sexual harassment is different for women employed in professional (white collar) positions in male-dominated occupations, for whom the economic losses, fear of reprisal and negative outcomes may be much greater. The literature did reveal that those who choose to work in historically-male (blue-collar) occupations are more likely to experience harassment, that the experience of harassment is likely to be more severe, and that these women find it more problematic to respond to harassment than do other women. Very little work has been done to investigate the hostile work

environment in the aviation industry. These are serious gaps in the literature which should be addressed. It appears that with this study, I am embarking on new ground, since I am giving voice to women's stories and investigating sexual harassment in the aviation workplace which up until now has escaped scrutiny.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Research Design

This was a qualitative research study informed by feminist research perspectives and phenomenology. The feminist perspective views women as marginalized, living in a world of inequality and exploitation. Feminist research theory argues that knowledge may be used to perpetuate oppression, and challenges us to begin our research with people's own personal experiences (Kirby & McKenna, 1989). Women have traditionally been treated as objects in research. Feminist interview research explores people's views of reality and provides an opportunity for clarification and discussion (Reinharz, 1992). My research design treats the interviewees as active participants by using a method of guided conversation, as a means to develop an understanding of the social phenomenon of sexual harassment from the victims' own perspectives (Patton, 1980). Reflected in my design is the feminist belief that researchers must include their own experience and understanding in the process of creating knowledge (Kirby & McKenna, 1989). In this study, both researcher and participants are "insiders" to the experiences of being women pilots in the male-dominated world of aviation and, therefore, have "epistemic privilege" regarding these experiences (Narayan, 1992).

Phenomenological researchers study the way people experience their world, what lived experience is like for them, and how to best understand them (Tesch, 1990). This research design reflects a phenomenological approach in that I am using my own experiences of sexual harassment in aviation to gain access to others' experiences, and to gather in-depth descriptions of the phenomenon from the participants. Phenomenologists take these descriptions and submit them to a process of inquiry in which the researcher is open to themes that emerge (Tesch, 1990). My design uses the phenomenological approach to search for

common threads and characteristics unique to that group, within the responses of women pilots who have been sexually harassed.

According to van Manen (1990), phenomenology aims to describe what happens in the everyday life of people, before reflection or theory is added. Phenomenologists strive to gain a deeper understanding of the nature of meaning in a person's lived experience. Including the original voice of the people is one of the principles in phenomenology (van Manen, 1990).

According to Reinharz (1992), feminist researchers draw on many perspectives to do their work, and the emphasis is on plurality. "Feminists have used all existing methods and some have invented some new ones as well" (p. 4). It was important to me to find a way of working that would bring the women pilots' stories to life and make them visible.

Participants

I interviewed women pilots because I believed that they have stories to share and have not been given a voice. They were selected purposively because of their potential to illuminate the phenomenon of sexual harassment of women pilots in their workplaces. I selected women pilots who (a) represented a variety of occupational roles filled by women pilots; (b) had experienced sexual harassment at work; and (c) were willing to participate in intensive, in-depth interviews about their experiences. The participants were women pilots who have been employed in Canada in the aviation industry in a variety of occupational roles, including airline pilot, charter pilot, flight instructor, bush pilot and military pilot. Most of the women had served in more than one category of these flying jobs, and two had previously been flight attendants prior to becoming pilots. These women had considerable aviation experience, ranging from five to thirty years in the industry. They had extensive flying experience, averaging over 2000 hours of

flight time on several types of aircraft. They had flown equipment that included single-engine trainers, bush floatplanes, light and heavy twin-engine passenger and cargo aircraft, corporate jets, and fighters.

The nature of the aviation industry requires a pilot who is developing her career to 'pay her dues' by serving in a variety of roles, usually beginning with flight instructor, and moving upward to commuter or airline captain. The women in my study had served in several aviation positions prior to gaining their current job status. I acknowledge that there are women employed in aviation in non-flying roles--for example, air traffic controllers, aircraft engineers, flight dispatchers and flight attendants. However, it seemed prudent to exclude them from this study, and to limit the focus to women pilots whose work environment is distinctive within the industry due to the nature of their flight duties.

From my experience, there are unique characteristics in a woman pilot's work environment that may influence her response to sexual harassment. These include irregular and extended work hours away from home, layovers in distant locations, and isolation from peers. It is necessary to work in close physical proximity to males in aircraft cockpits where freedom of movement is restricted and the work is 'behind closed doors,' rendering it invisible. There is the necessity of functioning in a high stress, safety-sensitive environment as a member of a team. One must be able to trust and rely upon other members of the team in order to carry out the duties of the job safely and expeditiously.

Pilots are required to continually provide evidence of their competence to fly by performing well on regular proficiency flight tests in the presence of an examiner, and by providing evidence of medical fitness. This produces an aura of anxiety, since pilots must continually prove their capabilities and fitness. Therefore, many pilots live in fear of losing their licences, and thus their ability to

earn their livelihood. The current tight employment market and the cyclical nature of the aviation industry accentuate this aura of anxiety.

The industry is also hierarchical--almost para-military--in nature. Examples include: (a) its use of military type uniforms; (b) power imbalances between the various 'ranks' (i.e. captains, first officers, and second officers); and (c) the predominance of ex-military personnel in senior positions in the industry. There is also an 'aviation culture' that stereotypes pilots as males with a macho image and that mystifies the role of pilot. Those who fly airplanes are thus placed into an elitist, prestigious category of occupation, leading us to believe that it is a role to which no ordinary man, and few women, should aspire. Members of the general public tend to be in awe of pilots, believing that the job is complex and glamorous, and that they themselves could never do it. They have put pilots on a pedestal. I received much more attention and adulation as a commercial pilot than I ever have as a social work educator! Therefore, due to the unique milieu in which pilots do their work, and the resulting pressures, I deemed it appropriate to include only women who work in jobs that require active flight duty, and to exclude those who work in other capacities in the industry.

Although I have made a career change from commercial pilot to social work educator, I have remained an active member of the aviation community as a board member, consultant, and educator. In these capacities I have had the opportunity to give speeches and workshops at various aviation events, during which I would mention my planned research project. I connected with other women pilots who, during our conversations, made implicit references to their distasteful work environments. I picked up on this and, if they self-identified their experiences as incidents of sexual harassment, invited them to consider becoming part of my study.

I took care to make sure that I was selecting women who would talk about the phenomenon that I wished to understand. In some cases, this involved a brief discussion on what constituted sexual harassment, and on the difference between gender discrimination and sexual harassment. The broader definition of sexual harassment as a hostile work environment was utilized in these discussions. I pre-screened for women pilots who met the criteria of identifying themselves as recipients of sexual harassment, and who were willing to share their stories in a research project.

Purposive selection of participants provides no objective way to determine how typical the chosen participants will be (Polit & Hungler, 1991). However, I was not striving for generalizability, and I believed that purposive sampling was compatible with the purpose of this study: to develop an understanding of the sexual harassment experiences of the women interviewed. I paid careful attention to the rationale for selecting each participant, and discussed my choices with my committee.

Data Collection

My Approach to Data Collection

I conducted intensive, in-depth personal interviews with six women pilots in various locations throughout Canada. They resided in Ontario, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia. Given the complex and emotional nature of the problem being studied, I considered it inappropriate to use a questionnaire to elicit this data as the participants' words would have been reduced to statistics. As well, the study would not have yielded such powerful and insightful data (Polit & Hungler, 1991). Intensive conversational interviews are considered appropriate for studying meanings, organization issues, and personal encounters of people interacting in a close proximity to one another (Rubin & Babbie, 1989). In using this method of data collection, the researcher engages in a relationship with each participant while exploring her experiences,

and the use of the researcher's personal attributes such as empathy and intuition are considered beneficial to the research process (Burns & Grove, 1987). In conducting the interviews, I thought of myself as an active seeker of information about an issue that concerns me (Kirby & McKenna, 1989). Interviews enable us to hear the emotionally sensitive stories of women in a way that enhances our understanding of how they perceived their reality (Patton, 1980).

Procedures

The data was gathered using open-ended interviews. Patton (1980) describes three basic approaches to collecting qualitative data through open-ended interviews. I chose the general interview guide approach which involves outlining a set of issues that are to be explored with each participant before the interviewing process starts. The interview guide serves as a checklist so that the interviewer is sure to cover all pertinent issues during the interview. The issues were not raised in any particular order. This format was based on the premise that there was common information that I wanted to gather from each participant; but, no standardized set of questions was established in advance. This reflects the feminist perspective that women are experts on their own experiences, and that it is preferable for the interviewer and the participant to decide together how the interview will evolve (Kirby & McKenna, 1989). The input of each pilot helped to guide and to shape the research interaction.

Qualitative methods are not as standardized as other research approaches and, therefore, as the interviewer I needed to be flexible in how I carried out the study (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). In the course of the interviews, if participants raised issues that I had not thought of, I was flexible in allowing responses from one question to lead to a subsequent question (Rubin & Babbie, 1989). I did not, however, go into totally new topics that were not included in the framework of my interview guide. I relied on the interview guide to delimit the issues

to be discussed during the interview. The interview guide provided a framework within which I could develop questions and make decisions about which issues to pursue in greater depth (Patton, 1980).

I used the interview guide to develop six broad questions that were available to (a) "launch" the interview, (b) articulate the main issues that I wished to raise, and (c) put closure on the interview. I also developed a list of potential probes that I could use if necessary to keep the interview flowing and to direct the conversation along a particular path. Probes are useful interview tools to elicit a deeper response and to increase the richness of the data obtained (Patton, 1980). These questions were not always utilized--they were there in the background and available to 'prompt' me in eliciting meaningful responses.

The issues for the interview guide and the potential questions came from many sources, including my own values, experiences and beliefs. They also came from the literature review and other reading I had done. Issues to be raised during the interviews also came from other people with whom I discussed my research project, including members of my thesis committee, practitioners in the sexual harassment field, and women in aviation.

Patton (1980) describes six kinds of questions that can be used in an interview. I attempted to utilize a variety of question types in order to solicit the detailed information I wanted to gather:

1. I used background/demographic questions to establish the context in which the interviewee worked.

2. Knowledge questions were used to discern what the interviewee knew about sexual harassment and her response options when she was sexually harassed.

3. Sensory questions were used to get the interviewee to recreate for me the environment in which she worked: what I would see or hear if I walked in her shoes.

4. Experience/behaviour questions were used to elicit descriptions of experiences, behaviours and actions that I might observe if I were present with the interviewee in her workplace while she was experiencing sexual harassment (Patton, 1980).

5. I used feeling questions to gain an understanding of the emotional responses of the interviewees to their sexual harassment experiences.

6. I used opinion/value questions to find out what women pilots think about the problematic nature of their work world with respect to sexual harassment.

The challenge was to make a distinction between opinions and feelings for the interviewee, since the two are often confused (Patton, 1980). For example, if they said they viewed putting up with a harassing behaviour as 'part of the job,' I asked them what it felt like to continually tolerate something that was hurtful. This is a crucial component to interviewing women who have experienced sexual harassment, because it addresses their socialization (to accept their plight), and speaks to their oppression. This repertoire of potential questions and probes served as a backdrop to guide the conversation within the research focus established in the interview guide.

I collected the data by recording it on audiotapes. Each interview lasted between one and two hours, and the audio tapes were then transcribed into print data. During transcription, an attempt was made to include any pauses in the conversation, and to denote where empathic responses of the interviewer occurred, as these served as cues for identifying units of meaning and thus were integral to capturing the essence of the women's stories.

Data Analysis

My Approach to Data Analysis

Data analysis, in qualitative research, is a continual process that begins while the data is being collected (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984; Wolcott, 1990). Therefore, during the time that I was conducting the interviews, I was also involved in preliminary analysis. This included keeping track of evolving trends, noting relationships, developing concepts and following up on hunches through the use of field notes.

Data analysis is a complex process that involves transforming concrete bits of data into abstract concepts, and several strategies may be used to make sense of the data (Merriam, 1988). I was seeking understanding of a complex social phenomenon and attempted to achieve this by developing concepts and insights from patterns in the data (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984).

It was mentioned previously that qualitative researchers are flexible in how they go about conducting their studies, and this includes the analysis of data. Social phenomena, including sexual harassment, are complex, and qualitative research takes place in a diverse range of social settings; therefore, there are no hard and fast rules for qualitative analysis, simply general guidelines for effective analysis (Strauss, 1987). My data analysis plan reflected my own personal theoretical orientation (beliefs, values and experience) and my commitment to adopting techniques used by other feminist researchers as a means to honour women's voices.

Tesch (1990) developed a map of various types of qualitative research and, from this, four categories of research interests, or purposes. I found her categories useful in defining my research interest, and in selecting my process of analysis. She identifies one of these categories of research interests as the "discovery of regularities," in terms of commonalities or discerning patterns in the data (p. 78). According to Tesch, in this type of research, conceptual

categories of organizing data come from the data--rather than being pre-established--and the primary goal is systemic description of the phenomenon, with the goal of generating theory being secondary.

A sub-type of this category of research is phenomenography, in which patterns in conceptualization are explored. Phenomenography is used to chart the different ways in which people experience their reality, perceiving and conceptualizing the phenomena in their world (Tesch, 1990). I used analytic procedures from phenomenography because I felt it was an appropriate type of analysis for developing an understanding of how women pilots make sense of their sexual harassment experience, and of how they explain their responses. In phenomenography, the emphasis is on the 'way things work' in a person's world (Tesch, 1990).

There is another sub-type of research approach that Tesch (1990) describes as discerning patterns as deficiencies. This type of research is used for scrutinizing peoples' situations, and for devising strategies for making changes in practice where problems exist. To some degree, my research fell into this category, since I hoped to identify ways to make the experience of sexual harassment less problematic for women pilots.

Procedures

Hycner (1985) presents a sequential procedure for phenomenologically analyzing interview data, which I followed. When the interviews were transcribed, I had them typed up in a double-spaced format, with wide right margins so that notes and codes could be inserted into them (Polit & Hungler, 1991). I re-read the data several times so that I became very familiar with them. I also asked a colleague to read through the data to see if they could notice useful elements that I had missed. I used Hycner's (1985) technique of phenomenological reduction which involves "opening ourselves to the phenomenon as a phenomenon...not to see this event as an example of this

or that theory...but as a phenomenon in its own right, with its own meaning and structure" (p. 27).

I analyzed and coded my own data, gradually making sense out of the women's stories, using my intuition and insight as I immersed myself in the data (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). As I read through the data, I made notations of ideas, interpretations and hunches in the margins. I also highlighted elements that possibly represented tentative patterns or concepts. I developed a categorizing system from the women pilots' words, ways of thinking, and patterns of behaviour (Tesch, 1990).

The units of analysis were a phrase, sentence or paragraph that later served as the basis for defining categories (Merriam, 1988). I was creative in deciding what words to highlight. I tended to select a phrase because (a) it was a recurring issue, (b) it related to my research questions, (c) it surprised or intrigued me, or (d) it was consistent with what I had read in the literature. Phenomenographers call these 'illustrative utterances' and sort these quotes based on their similarity (Tesch, 1990). I coded the data with each group of quotes constituting a category. This was done by putting each unit of information on a separate index card and coding it according to explicit criteria, such as situational factors, emerging patterns, and concepts (Merriam, 1988).

Concepts are abstract ideas derived from empirical facts, and are used to illuminate social phenomena that are not readily visible in written text (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). I used my intuition to develop conceptual categories that captured the meaning of the women pilots' stories. Also, when I noted a pattern in the data, I compared quotes to determine if a concept tied them together. I looked for underlying similarities between themes and recurring regularities in the data. This systematic work of devising categories was informed not only by the participants' input, but also by my intuition, the aims of my study, and my prior knowledge of the phenomenon (Merriam, 1988). As I analyzed the

data, I referred to the literature to relate my findings to what other writers have said (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984).

The final stage in my analysis was to honour the data, which meant removing extraneous influences, such as my own personal views of the world. Taylor and Bodgan (1984) describe this process as discounting the data, or, interpreting the data in the context in which they were collected. I took several considerations into account, including the influence of my (or others') presence in the setting, and my critical reflection on how my own assumptions, beliefs and biases influenced the analysis. I asked colleagues to read the transcripts and my list of common threads to check for missing items, and for bias. I provided interviewees with a list of the common threads and asked them to assess whether these accurately reflected the experiences they had shared with me. According to Taylor (1984), these steps are helpful in assessing the validity and credibility of my analysis. In writing up the discussion section, I integrated quotes from the transcripts with my analysis and connections to the literature, in order to give the women pilots an opportunity to have their own voices heard. "We do this out of respect for women's voices and to reduce potential errors in communicating the thoughts of others" (Reinharz, 1992, p. 9).

Authenticity of the Results

This study was designed in a way that the results are not intended to be generalizable. I chose a design that would facilitate hearing the stories of women pilots relating experiences which were truthful and meaningful to them, and that would allow me to interpret in interpreting the phenomenon of sexual harassment as it has been lived and perceived by these women. In a study of this nature, the investigation can be deemed credible if (a) the study provides interpretations of these sexual harassment experiences that the women pilots would immediately recognize as their own descriptions, and if (b) the readers would

recognize the phenomenon of harassment, if confronted with a situation similar to that of the women studied, with no prior exposure to the phenomenon apart from reading this study (Sandelowski, 1986). Rather than looking for generalizability, I was looking for authenticity in my results.

The intent of the study was to capture a variety of ways in which women pilots think about this problem. It is expected that other women pilots who read the results will recognize themselves in the study, for their stories will likely be similar. The results may be transferable to women in other male-dominated occupations as well, such as the trades and technologies. What I learned from the stories of the women pilots in this study may be quite similar to what I would hear from women working in other male-dominated fields. Reichardt and Cook (1979) report that generalizability is usually informal in this type of study. They argue that a depth of understanding of an individual participant's situation can aid in informal generalization.

The participants were chosen for their potential to illuminate the phenomenon of responding to sexual harassment in a male-dominated workplace. While not representative in the quantitative sense, a woman pilot belonging to a specified group of pilots is considered to represent that group. Her experience represents a "slice of the world" (Sandelowski, 1986, p. 32) in which women pilots function.

Ethical Considerations

Right to Self-Determination and Privacy

This study honoured the ethical principle of respect for individuals and their capacity for self-determination (Burns & Grove, 1987). I informed the potential participants, verbally and in writing, about the nature and purpose of the research. (See the Information Sheet for Potential Participants in Appendix A.) They were informed verbally during the screening of potential participants, and in writing

in the letter of informed consent. I included an explanation of how the findings would be used. The criteria used to screen them for potential participation in the study was also explained. I also informed them, verbally and in writing, that their participation was voluntary. I advised the potential participants that they had the right to withdraw their participation in the study at any time. This included the right to refuse to participate in any particular section of the interview, and to refuse to answer a specific question during the interview. In order to ensure procedurally that the participants' rights to self-determination and privacy had been honoured, I addressed this issue twice: verbally, when initially approaching them to participate, and in writing, just prior to beginning the interview.

I obtained, in writing, informed consent from the participants. This consent was obtained in the form of a letter signed by the participants prior to taking part in an interview. (See the Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study in Appendix B.) The following elements were included in the process of obtaining informed consent from each participant: (a) giving them essential information about the study; (b) ensuring that they comprehended this information; (c) obtaining their voluntary agreement to participate, after they had an opportunity to ask me questions and to consider this information; (d) giving an assurance of anonymity and confidentiality; (e) asking for permission to audiotape the proceedings; and (f) describing to them my plans for using and disposing of the recordings. For the purposes of informed consent, I used the format suggested by Burns and Grove (1987) and followed the guidelines set out by the university in its Request Form for Ethical Approval of Proposed Research Involving Humans.

Right to Anonymity and Confidentiality

Due to the methodology being used to gather data (personal interviews), the identities of the participants were linked to their responses during the data collection phase. However, once the

interviews had been conducted, I took steps to protect the participants' anonymity by keeping the subjects' names separate from the data through the use of a coding system. No full names appeared on any of the interviews. The signed consent forms were also kept separately from the data, and stored in a secure manner (Burns & Grove, 1987). The raw data was locked in a secure place to ensure confidentiality. I replaced the participants' names with fictitious ones. If there were characteristics of participants' stories that might have revealed their identity, and if they requested it, I changed the details to disguise their identity, while maintaining the integrity of their story.

Right to Protection from Discomfort and Harm

I did not anticipate any negative physical or economic harm for the participants. However, since I was to be interacting directly with the participants and asking them questions of a personal nature, there was a risk that they could experience emotional or social discomfort during and/or following the interview. Practitioners have learned that asking people to relive a sexual harassment experience can initiate intense emotional feelings. It was anticipated that some of the participants might find it difficult to re-visit episodes of past harassment through the interview process. I believed that I had an ethical responsibility to these participants to anticipate these effects, and to help the interviewees by identifying supports. I therefore implemented the following: (a) I offered to provide a referral to an employee assistance professional or private practitioner in the participant's geographic area, who was familiar with sexual harassment issues; (b) I advised the participants of their options for pursuing a complaint under human rights legislations; and (c) I offered to link the participants to each other for mutual self-help, with the prior permission of each participant. In addressing the participants' rights to protection from discomfort and harm, I attempted to balance the

potential benefits of having the women's stories made visible with the risk of the emotional discomfort previously mentioned.

At the end of each interview, I advised the participant that I would make myself available for a debriefing session during the day or two following the interview, if she wished. This provided an opportunity for participants to deal with any emotional stress that resulted from stirring up strong feelings following the interview. It also provided her with a chance to clarify any outstanding issues raised. Following each interview, I recorded in a journal my personal reflections on how the experience was for me, including my emotional responses and special insights. This helped to keep my experiences separate from the research data. In these reflections, I noted any changes in my data gathering plan, probes that worked especially well, and new questions that arose which were not in my original plan (Kirby & McKenna, 1989). With their permission, I also wrote up any comments that were made by the participants after the audio tape was turned off. This journal also contained record-keeping with respect to the data collection process, such as decisions related to the use of the interview guide/questions. In the journal, I also kept track of emerging themes, and recorded concepts and propositions as they arose (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). Due to the nature of the content being discussed, I found it necessary to schedule debriefing sessions for myself, to discuss with a colleague my own feelings of anger and frustration that arose from hearing the women's stories, and from re-living the negative aspects of my own aviation experiences.

There were some ethical considerations unique to the study because of the nature of the aviation industry. As the participants demonstrated in their interviews, the aviation community is very small and the women within it are extremely visible across the country. Many described it as working in a fishbowl. Therefore, some of the them knew each other from previous jobs, or knew <u>of</u> each other. A couple of them

could be easily identified if knowledge of their work history were revealed, since they had been among the first women in Canada to break the gender barrier in certain flying roles. A few were fearful of potential ramifications (including loss of their job) if word spread about their participation. This meant that traditional measures taken to protect their anonymity would not necessarily meet their needs.

One woman pilot--who was in a key position in the industry--described herself as the "queen of harassment" for having endured 20 years of it, but screened herself out at the time of selection because she felt she was too visible in the industry, and would be extremely vulnerable if it became known to her co-workers and supervisors that she had been interviewed. Her fears were validated when, later in the study, the participants identified men in her particular category of aviation as "the worst harassers."

While some of the women wished to keep their participation in the study confidential, others seemed to feel comfortable, and in some cases eager, to share their experiences of participating in the study. A couple of the participants, driven by their own anger and their perception of the public's 'need to know', said they did not fear being identified as a participant. They conveyed that it was 'about time' the industry and the general public learned about the hostile work environment in which women pilots do their work.

There were several factors that influenced whether or not the participants were concerned about their anonymity. These included (a) whether their workplace had a union; (b) whether they were still working alongside the alleged harassers; and (c) whether they were in a position to have some power, such as captain status. It is important to recognize that the range of concern (fears and perceptions of vulnerability) varies from woman to woman, and that as researchers we cannot assume that standard procedures adopted by the researcher will be appropriate for all women. My experience in conducting this study shows

that we must be vigilant and help each woman to assess her own needs with respect to confidentiality.

In the sexual harassment field, protecting the identity of the victim and disguising the situation also provides protection and anonymity to the harasser. Some women realize this but still, for safety reasons, feel a need to disguise any identifying characteristics of their stories. Other women, usually those who have endured an accumulation of years of harassment, say 'enough is enough' and no longer wish to protect their harassers. In this study, both of the above situations arose, and there were times when women who originally thought they wanted privacy and anonymity, changed their minds after they had re-lived their harassment experiences during the interview and were feeling a new sense of rage and frustration about the treatment they had been receiving. Therefore, these confidentiality/anonymity issues were complex ones when working with vulnerable women in an industry where they were higly visible due to the male-dominated nature of the workforce. It might be useful to ask ourselves if there are other groups of participants or fields of study that would have similar complexities on ethical issues due to the visibility and smallness of their community: for example gay/lesbian research projects.

Chapter Four: Results

Introduction

In this chapter, I present the themes that emerged from the stories of the women pilots whom I interviewed. In an attempt to enhance our understanding of the dynamics of the harassment, I have chosen to discuss the themes separately in this chapter in order to illuminate the issues within each one. However, it is important to realize that, in the reality of the lives of women pilots, these themes are interwoven, forming a tapestry that represents their lived experience and one that is continually evolving.

Invading a Male Culture

No Place For a Woman

The participants in this study do their work within an environment that is hostile: they receive messages from their male co-workers that they are invading a male domain and are not wanted there. Many of them had difficulty in getting hired in the first place:

> Sarah: When I went to the airline for my interview, I was told basically that I had all of the same credentials as the male pilots being interviewed. I wasn't taken at that time. I was told I needed to get some more commuter time...I felt that I was experienced enough, since I already had three thousand hours of airline transport time and was as experienced as my male counterparts. I didn't bother applying again to that airline.

A participant named Nancy recounted how she was told outright that she could not have a bush flying job because she was a woman:

> I was told by a prospective employer, "no, you can't fly in the bush...you couldn't possibly do bush flying"--well, I ended up later on flying in the bush. I found out there is very little actual manhandling of the freight required.

Every participant mentioned this sense of being 'unwanted' in the workplace. Whether the flying job sought was corporate jet pilot, charter pilot or pilot in the Armed Forces, they all received the message that they were invading male territory. This is what Debra, the military pilot, had to say:

> They give you a hard time for wanting to do what you're doing. I wanted to be a pilot in the military. It's no different than a guy who wants to be a military pilot. But they don't see it that way. They see it as a woman impinging on a man's domain. That was the fight for me.

Debra fought the good fight for 21 years. Finally, she decided to resign from the military when she became tired of the struggle for acceptance that occurred each time she received a new position. Debra explained that, "I'm resigning because after 21 years, I'm sick of having to prove myself, and sick of superiors not wanting me to work for them because I'm a woman."

Another participant felt that she was hired reluctantly, and was treated differently as a form of punishment for breaking into that culture:

> Molly: They didn't really want to hire me...I got put right away on the older airplane for a minimum rate of pay, even though my flying experience was greater than half the guys there. I worked my fifteen hours a day and just didn't seem to be getting promoted to a larger aircraft, but a couple of guys below me were promoted. I asked the chief pilot why I was not moving up in spite of having a couple of thousand hours of experience. One of the reasons given for not promoting me was that they weren't prepared to pay for two hotel rooms on overnight trips. I thought that was a lame excuse for this day and age. Regardless of that, raising the question of why I wasn't getting promoted created a lot of problems for me.

In an industry where your pay and status are often based upon the type of aircraft you fly and your position in the cockpit (First Officer versus Captain), not getting a promotion regularly can not only be demoralizing, but also quite detrimental in economic and career-development terms.

One participant found that her receipt of a promotion angered her male co-worker to the point that he physically threatened her:

> Emily: When I received the promotion, the fellow who thought he should have gotten the job started to quiz me: "So why did they choose you...and pass over me?" A few days later I met him in the hallway...it's narrow and you have to turn your body a bit to pass....As we did that, he grabbed me by my shirt collar. And he's a big man, a wrestler type. He works out and is 180 pounds of fighting fitness. He grabbed me with his fist, so it closed my shirt up around my neck...he grabbed me firmly and said "So, you want to be my boss--well I'll show you violence against women." I guess, psychologically, you either fight or take flight. Well, my instant reaction was simply that my arm came out of my pocket so

> fast and I grabbed his wrist and said to him "You get your hands right off me or I'll put your lights out!" He dropped me like a hotcake and took off. That incident was just a preamble to some others that I experienced with this particular fellow.

The woman who told me this story was a petite woman, and a very experienced pilot with many years in the industry. Her voice shook as she told me this example of the personal cost of accepting a promotion in the flying business.

Once these women had obtained considerable flying experience, they slowly gained acceptance. For some of them, it took more than 10 years or a few thousand hours of flying time to achieve credibility. Even though they had the qualifications and ability to do the job, they constantly were required to prove themselves capable:

> Samantha: When you fly with some of the older men, or the ex-military types, they seem to be more threatened and uneasy that a woman is there. But I was accepted more than the other woman pilot, because I had worked for fifteen years in aviation....Still, they didn't like the fact that I was there, but they accepted it. Having fifteen years of experience, I was okay...almost their equal, but still not...still below them. It was harder for them to question my competence, but I still definitely got the message that I wasn't really wanted there. They didn't really accept the other woman pilot...my female co-worker, because they didn't feel she had enough flying time in, even though a lot of the male pilots had started there themselves with absolutely no work experience of that type whatsoever.

Those women who had managed to acquire a job with an airline (as opposed to a charter company, flight school or bush airline) found that, after a long struggle, they could finally gain acceptance as a First Officer (which is the co-pilot position). However, they received messages that an attempt to become a captain would be met with resistance:

> Nancy: It's a high paying job with great benefits. I've had them say to me, "Well, if you're a captain, you'll be taking a job away from a man." When I first got hired here, one of the captains I flew with said to me "You know, they'll never make you a captain. They'll never make a woman a captain." Well, here we are. I'm a captain now, finally.

This woman found that the amount and type of sexual harassment varied, depending on whether she was in the left (Captain) or right (First Officer) seat:

> There has been a tremendous difference for me since I began to sit in the left seat, which is the seat of power. It's where you're

> the one in control. In the right seat, you're much more vulnerable. You have less power, and your boss is sitting in the cockpit with you. A lot of your future depends on how you react to him. If he's a check pilot [a senior pilot who does periodic proficiency checks], he determines whether you will advance or not.

She found that the unwanted sexual advances happened much less often once she occupied the left seat. However, getting to that left seat was often actively opposed by male colleagues. Sarah experienced it this way:

> When I received my captaincy, one of the other captains approached me and said he was going to grieve it through the union. He felt it was fine that I was a co-pilot because no real man wanted that job, but for me to be a captain--I would be taking a job away from a man. And he was going to grieve this through the union. This has a huge impact on your self-esteem.

Oddballs and Weirdos

The participants found that when they invaded this male culture they were sometimes labelled 'oddballs' or 'weirdos,' implying that they were role deviates in terms of what a woman was expected to do and be. This was especially true if they were the first to break a particular gender barrier, for example the first woman to fly a certain type of aircraft, or to be employed at a particular worksite. Here is how Debra described it:

> They felt threatened by our existence. I think the majority of their previous references to women were mothers, sisters, and girlfriends--in traditional roles. Now they come up against a woman who is not just their mother, nor their sister, nor their girlfriend. She is a competitor, who is female, in a world which is the epitome of male machoism and egotism.

Gutek (1985) says that expecting women to adopt traditional female roles in the workplace is a carry-over of gender-based expectations from the home. The participants all reported being seen as sex role deviates, and they experienced this in a number of different ways. One participant described it like this:

> Emily: Initially, I felt I was considered to be quite odd. They were wondering why I would want to do this 'man's job,' anyway. Some of them are more than curious...they have a genuine desire to see that you are put in your place and maybe even turfed out.

In the airline industry, women pilots appear particularly deviant because they are compared with the flight attendants who are perceived as women who 'know and keep their place.' In comparison to the flight attendants who work for poor wages and cater to the wishes of the flight deck crew, the women pilots appear quite deviant. Nancy made these observations:

> The male pilots' comments show where they consider a woman's role to be--what they consider our role in society. Flying the aircraft is a great job and they don't want women in on it. They want to keep women in the back of the airplane, in subservient roles like the flight attendants.

This viewing of women pilots as deviates by their superiors also affected the assignment of their non-flying job duties. In small companies and northern operations, it is customary for pilots to have some 'down time' when they have no flights scheduled, for a variety of reasons including weather conditions. Some pilots choose (and may be expected) to become involved in basic aircraft maintenance duties on non-flying days. Participants described different expectations for female pilots:

> Nancy: Male pilots would be allowed to go and hang around in the hangar. I'd have to sit in the office and type letters when I wasn't busy flying. I'd just as soon go into the hangar and get my elbows dirty...but I wasn't allowed to do that. I had to sit by the phone and act as dispatcher.

There could be several implications for the women pilots who are not allowed to tinker in the hangar and acquire knowledge about the mechanics of their airplanes. Such information is valuable to a pilot, especially when flying into remote areas or in emergency circumstances. It can also be personally very satisfying to get to know one's machine well, and may enhance one's confidence. Prevented from participating in these activities, women pilots are kept as outsiders and separated from their colleagues, removed from the team-building and the camaraderie that develops among the pilots and mechanical staff.

Such labelling of the women pilots as deviant is unwittingly reinforced by females in the industry, including secretaries, flight

attendants, and passengers. Participants reported that some of the women working in more traditional roles were openly judgemental or hostile towards them, implying that these deviate women pilots ought to know their place. Here is how one participant described her feelings when she became an airline captain:

> Nancy: I remember one of the flight attendants giving me a look that made me feel outed, like I didn't belong [on the flightdeck]. I don't know if it was her insecurities, but [in her mind] I certainly didn't belong there as a captain. There was a similar experience up north, with female passengers. My job was flying a twin engine aircraft, and when I saw two women standing there, I came out from behind the counter. They looked at me and said, "Well, are you the pilot?" When I said yes, one of them said to me, "Well, it's bad enough that it's a small airplane, but a woman pilot too?" I asked them what they did for a living. One of them piped up, "Well, I'm a secretary like I'm supposed to be." By now, I've got smoke coming out of my ears, but I tell myself to calm down. I went away and got the other pilot, introduced him and said, "Rest assured ladies, there is a man on board."

The participants who described this type of incident said they found it especially hurtful to have the label of deviate reinforced by other women, because they felt that they needed their support and encouragement. Not all of the participants connected experiences like this to society's socialization of women and the resulting internalized inferiority. They were more likely to feel hurt, angry, and confused by the lack of support from other women; although, after telling the above story, Nancy commented to me, "So you see, it's not just the men--it's society."

Portraying the woman pilot as a sex role deviate involves a wide range of behaviours that cause discomfort. One participant said she felt that the men needed to prove she and her two female co-workers were not normal women, since "normal women don't fly airplanes." Normal women are sex objects in our society. Women are supposed to throw themselves at the feet of men who fly airplanes. Women pilots have the audacity to reject this idea, and to take the controls of the airplane instead. Therefore, it is helpful if the men can rationalize these women as pilots by referring to them as being unworthy of being sex objects. Here is how it was experienced:

> Debra: The guys talked about the three women pilots. Nadine was fat and ugly, Lori was there just to look for a husband, and Debra was a butch and just wanted to be a guy anyway. We were all labelled by the guys...this is how they give you a hard time for wanting to be a pilot. Only weird women who are butches or ugly want to do something like this.

This stigmatization was done by men in supervisory positions, with the men under them following their lead. The women found it hurtful and said it served to ostracize them from their male peers. It was particularly distressing when the labelling categorized them as homosexuals within an industry which is described as homophobic by the participants. Here's what the military pilot, Debra, had to say:

> There were lots of leers and indecent proposals. You were either an easy lay or you were gay. Some guy would want you to go to bed with him, and when you turned him down, he would say you must be gay. The message is that you either come across or you're labelled as gay. At that time homosexuals were not allowed in the military. You could lose your job. So the pressure is that you have to go to bed with him to prove you are not gay--in which case you prove you are an easy lay. In this case, you will have a reputation as a whore because everybody will know about it...so they had you between a rock and a hard place. Although the official policy is now changed, and says they can't kick you out for being a homosexual, in reality it is still possible for them to get rid of you for being a lesbian or gay person. There is a policy that says they can force you out of the military if you become an 'administrative burden.' It's clear that memos, complaints, or hassles regarding your perceived homosexuality could be interpreted as creating an administrative burden.

It is distressing for women pilots to be labelled as lesbians because of the stigmatization of homosexuals within the industry. Participants reported that many male pilots are openly homophobic:

> Nancy: Most pilots are homophobic and racist as well as sexist. I've seen it and experienced it firsthand. There have been derogatory comments about a male flight attendant, calling him "faggot" with other people present. It makes you very angry.

Being labelled as deviant was not limited to the workplace. One of the participants was labelled a lesbian by her counsellor, based on his assumption that as a pilot, she was a sex role deviant. Here is what happened to Emily:

> I was going for counselling to a qualified psychologist. I was suffering from depression...partly I think due to my anger at the harassment and discrimination within the system. And this was his summation of my attempts to fly airplanes for a living: "I think you're problem is that you're a lesbian, and you won't admit it." His premise was that any woman who wanted to fly and have a

> lifestyle without restrictions in place for women, must be a butch. That was the root of my depression, according to him. I walked out of there and said to myself "That guy is sicker than I am!" I didn't make another appointment.

This illustrates how women pilots who seek help to cope with the powerlessness that results from harassment may be let down by professional helpers who have internalized society's attitudes about sex role deviancy.

Sexual Objectification

Sexual objectification of women was an issue raised by all the participants. They found it particularly offensive and demeaning to be portrayed as sexual objects rather than competent, professional pilots working in a demanding, technical occupation. It distracted them from performing their duties in a safe, professional and productive manner. Finding sexually explicit visuals in their operational and emergency checklists was a common occurrence. Nancy told of episodes where pilots had placed playboy centrefolds across the instrument panel and in the operational checklists. Here is Samantha's experience:

> In most of the aircraft there were Playboy-type pictures of naked women, or erotic pictures of men and women together in our operations handbook....We had to go through this manual...it's plasticized...twenty pages or more, and they would slip these pictures in and wait for you to open it up so they could see your reaction. I tried not to show that it made me uneasy. Somebody actually complained about the pictures and notices came out that there were to be no more of these in the operational material of the aircraft....The pictures would still come...they'd hide them in other places...in the aircraft compartments--I'd open a compartment up, and here would be this picture of a nude woman....They found this even funnier...more interesting...[and] it escalated.

This type of incident was demeaning for the women. They felt it devalued their role as women pilots, and added stress to their working relationships.

> Samantha: These pictures are offensive and embarrassing. It takes away from the mutual respect team members have for each other. You work in this close environment and have to rely on each other. Sexuality has no place in the cockpit. They treat you like a sexual object and you've dismissed that role in life. You just want to be seen as a competent pilot.

Participants also experienced unwanted sexual attention ranging from comments to sexual innuendos and potential rape. Sarah told this story about her boss, the owner of the corporate jet she was hired to fly as a co-pilot:

> He talked to me in such derogatory terms. He pointed at my bust and told me to turn around so he could see my buttocks. He complained to the captain [who had hired me] saying that he wasn't physically attracted to me...was picking my body apart. When we got into the air he kept touching me and I would pull away. The captain reached over and grabbed me while I was flying. I was very frightened and the owner made it quite clear that he would like to have me in the back, sexually abusing me, if he had found me attractive at all. I was glad that he didn't....I was afraid of being raped by the owner of the aircraft and by the captain....I was petrified.

Sarah said it was demeaning to herself to stay in that job, but also that:

> I needed that job. I needed jet flying hours [to qualify to apply for an airline pilot job]. I thought to myself "Where is the line here? Am I going to put up with this to keep this job?" I feel I put up with more than I should have.

Emily also found herself faced with unwanted sexual attention:

> I flew a bunch of fellows into a remote fishing camp. I had to take two trips. On the second flight, the guy sitting behind me [in the bushplane] put his hands over my shoulders from behind, and around my boobs while I was trying to fly the airplane. I was able to extricate myself from that by talking to the other passenger who was sitting on the right side. I turned around and told him in no uncertain terms to get the other guy's hands off me and keep them off. When I landed in the lake and began to unload the gear, there were fellows standing on the shoreline chuckling and laughing. One of them came down to the dock with only a towel tied around his waist. It was tied in the front, covering his rear end, but basically he was nude in the front. Everything he owned showed, and they all thought it was a helluva lark. They were all having a good laugh at my expense, watching what I would do. I unloaded the gear, ignoring him, acting as if he had all his clothes on, and then I just left. I'm not sure if that's hostility towards women, or just having a good laugh at my expense. I went into another lake, to move a fellow and his canoe. The fellow there undertook to make an attack on me...to make a sexual attempt. I ran for my airplane, jumped over the canoe and into the airplane. It was a remote camp, so I hollered at him that if he wanted to come out of that lake, he better get himself into the passenger side of the floatplane. I had the engine already started and had begun to taxi away from the dock when he clambered on board. Can you believe it...he was absolutely furious, and said to me, "You wouldn't get away with this, except for the fact that you can fly, and I can't!"

Token Women

One result of being labelled as deviant is that you may then be assigned the role of the token woman. At the same time that participants were working hard to prove that they were capable and belonged, they also felt pressure to succeed on behalf of the women coming after them. All the participants spoke about feeling a need not to let other women down. They were aware that, as token women, they were highly visible and their failures would be public. This pressure often came from their co-workers and superiors. The failure, or perceived failure, of other women was often used as a reason not to hire or promote the participants. They also sensed that their lack of success would be used to discriminate against women who followed in their footsteps. Their fears are substantiated by Hemming (1985), who identified this issue with respect to women who enter male-dominated occupations, and indicated that they are often seen to represent all women. Here's one participant's perspective:

> Sarah: I've had it happen numerous times where I've applied for a job and they say, "Oh well, we had a woman once and she didn't work out"....It turns out she did something wrong that was quite small or insignificant and was let go, and now that's used as a reason not to ever hire any more women. If I screw up badly, it'll affect the women coming behind me. I feel like I'm carrying a tremendous load for other women.

Another participant said this burden is especially heavy if the woman is the first one 'allowed' to break the barrier into a new type of flying:

> Debra: You've asked for this right [to fly in the military] and you don't have a proven track record yet so there's a lot of pressure. They expect us to fail; some even want us to fail. All the attention is on us. If you fail, everyone is going to know you failed. There's a lot of pressure because if you, as a female, fail, you're going to be down in the history books as the 'one who didn't make it.' There was this pressure to succeed or they would use it as an example of why women shouldn't be pilots in the military.

What seemed especially frustrating to the participants is that their efforts to succeed were often sabotaged by their co-workers or superiors. Often they were hired as a token woman, and never given the training that they deserved. Sometimes information was withheld from

them about how to perform the task successfully, so that they were left to stumble through and humiliate themselves in front of others. Some participants said they had been deliberately misled by false information. One participant said an incident report involving a collision between an aircraft and a ground vehicle was altered in order to put the blame on the woman:

> Samantha: We taxied into a truck actually, and the captain was male. I knew the truck was too close and the captain was following the signalman. The other woman pilot and I both indicated to the captain that we were too close to the truck--that we were going to hit and he should stop. I kept telling the captain to stop...quite loudly. We went into the office and the captain pulled out his form and said what happened. He even said the other woman pilot and I both told him to stop, and [he] chose to follow the signalman, so we hit the truck. The acting manager came in and looked at the report and said "No, this isn't it. You [the captain] can't admit to this." So he went and changed the report. He left out the part that the other woman pilot and I had spoken up...he had a whole different report. We had to go to a board meeting....There were about eight people sitting around. The acting manager was one of them. He was explaining what had happened in the incident. I spoke up, and pulled out a copy of the original report which we had signed and photocopied. I said "This is what actually happened." The acting manager and I didn't have very good feelings for each other. We were at each other whenever we saw each other. The board realized what happened and that he was totally against me and trying to put the incident down to because there was a woman, myself in particular, on board. Right when I left that meeting I had to go to my probation interview.

This woman had been recently hired at that airline and was still on her probation period, and therefore could have been easily dismissed. The acting manager later attempted to exercise influence over her by placing himself on her probation committee, which she found especially disconcerting since her continued employment there was on the line.

Another participant experienced sabotage in the form of being set-up for a potential accident:

> Emily: There was some sabotage...setting me up to do stuff that would make me look bad. I was new there, and they had an airplane in our fleet that had a particular handling problem. The chief pilot pointed this out to me and said, "Don't fly that airplane until you get a check-out on it." Another pilot came along later and said to me, "Oh, you're supposed to go and pick up this airplane and fly it over there." I smelled a rat, so I went to the chief pilot and asked "Have you changed you mind? Am I really supposed to go down to the airbase and pick up that airplane and ferry it?" He said, "No way, who told you that?" I said, "There must be a misunderstanding."

This sabotaging of token women in the workplace appears at first to be related to what Braid (1994) identifies as a tradition of harassing the rookie in blue collar work. However, the participants observed that such sabotage was not generally present among pilots, probably due to its safety-sensitive nature, and perhaps because it is a white collar workforce. They experienced the sabotage as being directed specifically at women who were attempting to break into a man's world: that is, daring to step outside their sex role boundaries.

Being hired as token women also put the women pilots at risk of being put on a pedestal, and thus at risk of becoming very visible and resented by their male co-workers. In some cases, token women were hired without the prerequisite qualifications and not given adequate training to perform their job duties. Here is one participant's experience:

> Samantha: When I was hired by the airline, less than one percent of the pilots were women. We were hired as tokens. They didn't want to hire me back in 1985, but all of a sudden they needed another woman pilot and they picked me out of the hat. They needed to get their female pilot numbers up. A friend of mine got hired in 1987. She had actually been out of aviation...hadn't flown for twelve years. She had very little experience and here they handpicked her and expected her to be at a higher level than she was, without any up-dated training to bring her up to the experience level needed. They had to hire a woman, so they were just going to hire one no matter what.

It appears that token women are often hired to meet the needs of the organization, rather than out of a genuine interest in giving women equal opportunities. One participant related how her airline decided they had a great idea for an all-female crew for an exhibition display:

> Nancy: I wasn't checked out on the DC-3. They phoned me and said they got a government grant to train me on the DC-3. They wanted me to participate in this exhibition. They said "We want you to do this, but we're not going to check you out in the airplane." I said "No way!" They just wanted me to sit there and move the steering wheel. They wanted the publicity from it. I was given two hours of training on the aircraft and told to go for my ride. I was furious. I said "I can't believe you're not giving me more training, I need more experience." I wasn't experienced enough, but the captain talked me through the ride and I passed. They wanted to benefit from the publicity of a token female crew. It undermined my belief in myself.

The participants found that by being put on a pedestal, they were the target of resentment from their male peers. One of them said that "with being on a pedestal, you're more visible and people are waiting for you to topple off."

Organizational Context and Culture of Aviation

Those Mysterious Men and Their Flying Machines

Throughout the years, while attending aviation events, I have heard the following anecdote (source unknown) about the early flying days, which serves as a good introduction to this theme. A farmer was working in his crops when a small aircraft circled overhead. Not accustomed to seeing flying machines, he watched mesmerized, totally unaware that the pilot was a female. Suddenly, the engine sputtered and the aircraft crash-landed in his field. He rushed to the scene, took a look at the heap of wreckage, saw an individual at the site who appeared to be unhurt but stunned, and ran to his home to call the authorities. He breathlessly reported that "An aircraft has crashed in my field, and there is no pilot on board...just a woman!" The assumption that women do not fly airplanes lives with us today, and describes the context in which women pilots do their jobs.

Flying has a mystique to it. The public perceives aviation to be fascinating, with the pilot's role perceived as impressive, complex in nature, and mysterious to the average person. The people who fly the airplanes benefit from a dimension of power that is derived from this mystique. It is occupational power, which is connected to the professional (white collar) status of the pilot's job and, more specifically, to the aura of mystery that surrounds flying machines. Pilots have a vested interest in maintaining this mystique and, thus, the prestige of their role. When women demonstrate that they can fulfil this role with competence, they are demystifying the pilot's role. The men are afraid that people will assume that if a woman can do it, then

it can't be so difficult. Thus, women pilots pose a threat to a male pilot's occupational status. The participants related examples of how the job is kept mystified, and of how a woman may pay a personal price for demystifying it. Here is how Emily described it:

> Some jobs are considered to be very rough and tough and difficult....If you have someone who is five-feet-one-inch tall like I am come along and do the job without too much difficulty, then all of a sudden, it doesn't look so difficult after all. I suppose it takes away some of that allure or bravado that's associated with doing the job.

The military pilot, Debra, saw it this way:

> Now they come up against a woman who is their competitor...who is female in a world where you can imagine as a young boy they grew up dreaming about being the male fighter pilot. Being a military pilot is the epitome of machoism, egotism and chauvinism. Being a fighter pilot is seen as the ultimate fantasy...women will fall at your feet because you're doing this...it is the epitome. Then, here it is, all of a sudden this dream job is being done by a woman. What happens to that macho image? "If a woman can do it, what does that make me?" he asks himself.

Much of the mystification was related to perceptions of physical attributes needed to do the job. Nancy experienced it like this:

> They told me I wouldn't be able to physically handle flying in the bush. They wouldn't even let me try it. Well, I ended up bush flying and I found out that there's actually very little of actual manhandling of the freight. They also told me that I couldn't fly a DC-3. They said I wasn't big enough to fly it. Yes, it's a heavy airplane, but you don't have to be 250 pounds to fly it. It's mystified by the men...it's a great job and they don't want women in on it. It's kind of a facade. It doesn't take any special part of your body; you don't require a penis to fly an airplane. And you don't need that male Herculean effort to come to the rescue. They say you have to have it, though. I think that's what gets pilots into trouble, is when they start thinking they're God's gift to aviation. That's how accidents happen.

<u>Trust Me</u>

In many of their jobs, women pilots are expected to function as a member of a team with one or two other pilots. The work is invisible, in that it is done behind closed doors, encapsulated in a cockpit. Teamwork is required in order to get the job done efficiently, often under stressful conditions and tight schedules. It is essential to trust one's team member and to work collaboratively in these safety-sensitive pilot roles. When emergency procedures are required, this trust and co-operation is crucial. The participants found that the

hostile environment in which they worked diminished their ability to function effectively with the other crew members. Some male pilots serving in the capacity of co-pilot were unwilling to take orders from a female captain, even though she had operational responsibility for the decision-making and the safe operation of the aircraft. Sarah said "They resent the fact that I'm a captain and in a position of authority." Nancy cited an incident which she found distressing:

> As a captain, I have asked for a certain job to be done, and instead of carrying out the request, the co-pilot has questioned me. For example, I say "Please call air traffic control and request an altitude change to 19,000 feet to get over the thunderstorms." He'll balk and say "They won't give it to you." I have to reply "I'm not asking for your opinion on whether they will give it to us, I'm asking you to request an altitude change." Of course, he makes the request, and air traffic control approves it.

The participants were clear in their minds that this questioning of their authority occurred because they were women. It often happened in times when quick co-operation from a co-pilot was needed, for example when taking evasive action to avoid a collision. Nancy said "It makes you angry, and I don't suppose the anger is very helpful in the cockpit when you're trying to do a technical job." Regardless of whether the participants were serving in a co-pilot's or captain's role, they found it unsettling that they had to rely on a team member who had been continually derogatory towards them and sexually demeaning. You need to be able to establish the type of relationship with your co-worker, that, in an emergency situation, you will know that you can depend upon each other. "How can you trust and rely on a partner who doesn't believe that women belong in the cockpit, and who is sexually harassing you?" asked Nancy.

Men's behaviour in groups also seemed to be a factor with respect to developing good working relationships among pilots and co-pilots. The participants felt that they were treated differently by a colleague depending on whether they were interacting one-on-one, or in the presence of other male co-workers. Debra had this experience:

> Your buddy is in the cockpit with you, flying along, and he thinks you're great. Then when you land, and you're all together with the rest of the pilots, he ignores you...doesn't want to be associated with you....He doesn't want to admit to the other guys that he actually flew with a female pilot and thought she was competent...that he enjoyed it. When they ask him "How is she? [as a pilot]," he's non-committal and says "She's okay." He doesn't build you up...he's just neutral...or he might even tear you down in front of them.

The participants got the impression that for some of their male co-workers it is all right to treat you as an equal person and a competent pilot when you are alone with them, but not in front of other men. Here is Emily's experience:

> What drags me down the most is this anti-female stuff in an all-male workplace. When the male pilots are together there are a lot of jokes that put women down. And the weirdest thing about it is, they do it in front of you. Men generally seem to be quite mystified by women and how they operate. They think we're unpredictable and emotional and often say to me: "I'd rather be in a group that's all men, so we can have fun like we used to do. Now that women are in our group, we can't say fuck and all those other things." It's some kind of male culture where it's all right to put women down and say derogatory things about us, and treat us as sex objects when men get together in a group. It certainly doesn't contribute to a sense of being part of a team, and trusting each other when they do this kind of thing. It ostracizes us, and it's a very hurtful thing between the men and women.

Grapevine

The aviation community is very small and tightly knit. Participants shared how these aspects of the aviation community affected their personal and work lives. There are so few women that they are extremely visible within the industry in the first place. Added to this is the concerted effort to exclude them from a male domain. Within the industry there exists a country-wide, informal communication system that the participants referred to as the grapevine, or telegraph. Generally, they said the stories about women pilots that make it through the grapevine are negative ones. This telegraph conveys mostly negative messages about these extremely visible token women, and about the things they've done (personally and professionally), throughout the industry in a way that does not seem to happen with the men. Here is how one participant described the grapevine:

> Sarah: News about women pilots travels very fast in the aviation industry. Anything you do, because there's so few of us around, gets transmitted through the grapevine at amazing speed. It seems that everyone wants to know everything about us...especially if we screw up or if they can learn anything about our personal life. It seems to be a way of proving that women should not be in these positions. It provides evidence to confirm that we shouldn't be here. So you really don't want to screw up...it puts a lot of stress on you. It's like living in a fishbowl.

Emily, a very experienced pilot and instructor with over 25 years in the industry, found the grapevine to be extremely distressing. She also identified how both professional and personal issues become grapevine topics:

> Three of my co-workers gossiped about me behind my back when I first started working there. They passed rumours to the students, who passed them on to others in the industry. The story going around was "Well, she can't fly worth a shit. I don't know what she's doing working here."' I finally got word of this gossip when it was spread five hundred miles away. A student was sitting at a bar drinking and unknowingly sat beside a friend of mine. He told her, "We've got a new woman pilot working at the college, and she can't fly worth a shit." My friend asked who this woman pilot was. She then told him that she knew me and had flown all over the place with me, and assured him of my flying ability. She asked him where he got the impression of my flying...had he flown with me? It turns out, he had never been in an airplane with me. He got the story from another instructor. And that particular instructor had never flown with me either! That's the kind of thing I was fighting. When my friend got on the phone and told me about this, I realized that someone in my own organization was trying to scuttle me pretty bad.

This same participant gave an example of how the grapevine often carried stories about the personal or sex lives of the women pilots:

> I was approached by a Transport Canada inspector and he said, "I hear you're having an affair with so and so at --- airbase." He was referring to a base where I worked, where there is a male friend that I went to high school with--both of us are happily married people. We have nothing to do with each other, except for our business relationship. The Transport Canada office is 500 miles away, yet somewhere within Transport Canada, the inspectors come up with this idea that I am having an affair with this fellow. This inspector seemed really bent on finding out how sexually active I had been.

The participants felt that this negative gossip was hurtful, frustrating and particularly problematic for them. Here is Nancy's perception: "The loose-lipped nature of the industry is particularly damaging to women. They can ostracize you just by talking. If you screw up, or complain about something, everyone knows it and you're black-listed." Molly

found that the mistakes she made were blown out of proportion and passed around at the pilots' pub:

> The stories get exaggerated and repeated. Their gossip is just a way of indicating to me that they never wanted me there in the first place. When I was on the sked run, flying into points north, and stopped for lunch, none of the guys would even sit with me. I think it was because of the rumours that I had slept with the boss to get the job. I was totally an outcast because of these unfounded rumours. Word seemed to travel fast...I felt like if I complained, I would not get a good recommendation for another job. I think complaining just adds fuel to the fire. I was astounded to find out that this rumour had made it down from the north and reached one of my buddies who heard it while flying for a commuter airline.

The participants found this fishbowl existence to be extremely stressful and impossible to remedy. Debra described her feelings:

> I'm tired of being in the fishbowl. I'm going to take off my uniform and put on a pair of blue jeans. When I walk downtown on the street, nobody will know who I am. The pressure won't be there anymore. I've had enough of it.

Jumping Through Hoops, Again and Again

The participants were constantly having their flying abilities questioned, and were continually required to prove that women belonged in the pilot's seat. Here is how one participant described it.

> Nancy: We jump through the same hoops as the men, pass the training sessions, the flight tests and line indoctrination-- then we're still not good enough. The check captain said everything had been going fine, there had been nothing wrong with my performance. But he got called into the office by the training manager and raked over the coals about my progress. I had received 100 percent on my exam. They had seen my ability. He told me he had never been grilled so much about a captain's progress before. It's always, "You're not quite good enough....I have to check on your competency."

The necessity of having to 'prove yourself capable' is continuous and becomes more salient each time the women pilots begin a new position:

> Nancy: You never know where it's going to come from next. If you do make a mistake, and you get hauled up on the carpet and asked to justify your decisions, you never know if they're going to judge you as a capable individual or as a female.

Over a period of time, these women found that their confidence was undermined and they were experiencing self-doubt. It was described by Nancy as the imposter syndrome:

> One of the biggest things is my lack of belief in myself. You ask yourself, "Did I get this job by mistake? How have I gotten this

> far?" I used to think, "One day Transport Canada is going to take my licence away"...and that's silly, but it's true. These are the things that go through your mind.

The Hierarchical Nature of Aviation

The aviation industry is hierarchical and almost para-military in nature. Uniforms identify job status and the industry is highly regulated, in a top-down manner, by the mostly-male Transport Canada inspectors. Transport Canada is responsible for the administration of legislation governing the safe and efficient operation of the national air transportation system under the Aeronautics Act. Littler-Bishop, Seidler-Feller, and Opaluch (1982) describe the aviation industry as "one in which status is emphasized and strictly defined by the use of titles, marked differences in salary and in job function" (p. 140). The participants viewed many of their experiences as an abuse of power by those higher up in the hierarchy, or by those with close connections to higher-ups. They particularly expressed frustration at the gender discrimination and sexual harassment by Transport Canada inspectors. Nancy described this episode:

> I actually had a Transport Canada inspector...sit me down one day and after a few rum and cokes told me he couldn't sleep one night because he was going to have to pass a female [on her proficiency ride]. His fear was he was going to have to pass her and she was going to become a captain. He didn't like women doing this, moving up to captain. He knew she had the capability. He was ex-military, macho. Has a few drinks and tells you what women really should do. We bear the brunt of that. We pay the price and suffer economically.

Participants reported that sexual harassment, especially in terms of jokes and innuendos, was a huge problem even within Transport Canada. As Nancy pointed out, "In terms of sexual harassment, the inspectors don't even seem to know what's inappropriate. So if we leave it up to them to police it, it's ludicrous."

Participants held the view that the proliferation of ex-military men within Transport Canada brought with it pervasive sexism:

> Nancy: It's an old boys' attitude. A lot of ex-military guys who retire, get on with Transport Canada and have never flown with a woman. I think it's never occurred to them that a woman can

> perform to the same competency as a man. They probably wish we women would just go away.

The participants realized that Transport Canada has a great deal of control over their careers. As Nancy put it, "I should be intimidated by their power...Transport Canada has the ability to pull my licence or shut the airline down."

All the participants expressed frustration at the lack of support for a harassment-free workplace from those higher up in the hierarchy. Within their own companies they did not feel they got the support they deserved. Here is one woman's description of a cockpit management resource course in which the presenters, hired by management, were sexist and guilty of sexually harassing comments:

> Sarah: This training is supposed to help you become better team members and co-operate in the cockpit. The training session was mandatory. The presenters were male, with chauvinist ideas. He was very sexist. There were jokes and innuendos that would be considered sexual harassment. It was meant to be humorous. The men enjoyed it. I did not find it humorous at all...it was demeaning to women. But my bosses arranged it, and they even had him come back again.

Many of the participants felt frustrated at either being sexually harassed by their superiors, or by a lack of support from their supervisors when they complained about sexual harassment. Here is Debra's experience:

> I was fondled by my boss in public. This guy came up behind me and grabbed hold of both the cheeks of my ass with his hands and said "Nice ass." He did it a second time. I almost lost my cool. I came close to turning around and drifting this guy. I wanted to strike back. I really wanted to hit him. He was a senior officer and I would have been charged with assault. My current boss saw what happened and came over, and said "Debra, let's talk about it...he's drunk you know." I said I didn't care...I was sober and I was really angry. How do I speak up for my rights? There was not another female in the mess...there were lots of guys there. What are all the rest of the guys going to think...that's it's all right to do that to me, if I don't speak up? My boss talked to me. On Monday morning, I got to work, and the guy who committed the offence called me and apologized. My boss knew him. No doubt my boss spoke to him--as a way of avoiding an assault charge, he was told to apologize. My point was made. He was an older guy...more senior, been around for awhile...maybe in his day and age it was an acceptable thing to do, but not anymore.

Debra said the apology diverted her proposed assault charge. She chose not to carry the complaint forward, saying "I'm not a martyr. I'm

not going to stand up and run the case forward for the rest of the military. I have a reputation I want to protect as well." Obviously, in her mind, she had made her point and the personal cost of carrying it any further would be too high. She said that since she was in a training program in which she was breaking gender barriers, carrying it forward may have "blown the whole lid off things and seriously jeopardized the whole program for the women."

The participants who flew in the civilian world similarly experienced a lack of support from superiors with respect to carrying complaints forward. Here is what happened to Emily:

> There were some pornographic materials about rape left on my desk. It was a poem about rape...it had very graphic displays of all the story of the rape and implied that women enjoy that kind of thing. It was really sick stuff about violence against women. I found it very upsetting...[and] ignored it for a couple of days. I tried to flush out where it came from. I photocopied it and put a copy on my boss's desk saying I was very upset by it. He immediately took it up with the other faculty to find out what was going on. He asked me if I wanted to talk about it. But I said, "No, I'm too hurt and upset to talk about it right now."...It happened when there was a major amount of work to be done. Later I went in and talked to him about it. On one hand, he gave me the option of taking the complaint to the sexual harassment office...[but] on the other hand, he took this option away. He said, "It would really hurt our program and we can't stand the publicity of a harassment complaint because we already had a complaint against one of our faculty members by a student." In a way, he boxed me in as well. But he did ask me what else I could do and said he'd support me. I said I wanted him to talk to the person responsible and I wanted it on his record. When my boss talked to him about it, he denied it. My boss backed down. He said to me, "What am I supposed to do, call in all the guys one at a time, and see who's lying?" I told him I wanted every person in our department to attend an educational session on sexual harassment. My boss arranged this. My boss made a list of everybody and sent them a letter recommending that they attend. The session ran two more times. Each time my boss sent out letters telling those who had not yet attended to go. But there was backlash. The guys were saying, "Good god, we've got to go to this stuff"...Very reluctantly they went. The sad thing is, my working relationship with the guys has changed completely. I'm not nearly as friendly with them as I used to be. My boss is wary of me and afraid that next time if something like this comes up, I won't let it stay within our department. Nobody will open their mouth to say anything...if they do, they always preface it with "Oh well, don't think I'm sexist or anything, but...", and then they'll tell a very sexist joke. They just don't really understand that just because they prefaced it with that comment, it doesn't make it okay to tell sexist jokes.

Isolation

The participants find that they are very isolated within the industry. There are very few of them--less than three percent of the workforce--and they seldom get to see each other, let alone work together. Here's how Sarah talked about it:

> It's very, very difficult. There are so few of us that we don't get to fly together. I can count on one hand the amount of shifts I've actually done with another woman pilot. It means that you don't have anyone of your same gender to share things with. Guys get together and go for a beer after work. If I was flying with another female, I'd say "Let's go for a walk," but I don't say that to the male pilots because they'd wonder if you're trying to pick them up or something.

Debra made this point:

> If you said to the guys, "Imagine how difficult it is to be one woman of two hundred pilots. Can you imagine being the only guy in the whole place?" They'd answer: "Oh, yeah, I'd love it!" They just don't see it our way. They have their own peer group, so they have no understanding of what it's like for us.

Each participant felt as though she were a lone voice in the wilderness, attempting to speak out about her hostile working environment, but never quite feeling heard. Molly described it this way:

> Until I got on with my current employer, in all my jobs I was the lone woman. It was just awful to have no support. You had no-one to back you up, no-one to fight the same battle. I was always the single person trying to convince the company to change their ways. One voice just doesn't matter. All my bosses were men and they just didn't understand....If there had been a few women pilots, the managers may have been able to hear the complaints--not from one person, but from several. That may have opened their eyes so they could see things a bit differently.

Participants also expressed a need to have a same sex peer with whom they could commiserate, and receive validation of their feelings of anger, hurt and frustration. Here is an example:

> Sarah: I get together with the other female captain in our airline all the time, now that we live in the same city. It's extremely helpful and we've become close friends. We talk about a lot of incidents that come up. For example, there are a couple of male First Officers that we fly with, and each of us felt they were trying to take control of the cockpit--trying to be the captain. We didn't know if it was just happening to us as women, or whether it happened with all the captains. So now we get together and bounce it off each other. It is absolutely invaluable for me to have another woman pilot to validate my feelings and experiences.

> I think it would be extremely helpful if we could get together with the other women pilots but everyone is at different bases.

Participants felt this isolation most acutely when they attempted to complain about sexist or sexually harassing behaviours. Samantha's viewpoint was that you are often out on a limb all by yourself:

> If there were more women, and we weren't so visible, a complaint could be brought out anonymously so that one woman couldn't be pin-pointed as having spoken up against a senior man in the company. If you're the only one, you'll be ostracized. It's very hard when there's such an idyllic group [of male pilots] and they will stand together. So many men versus so few women. Some larger airlines have a support group of women that were hired together and they have gone through a lot of the same experiences and are behind you as a group. Once you have the numbers up, you are much more powerful.

One participant filed a complaint and found herself an outsider:

> Molly: I was an outcast from the group and the men felt that I shouldn't have filed a complaint because they didn't want to bear any responsibility for what was going on. There were a few men who supported me and said that this whole harassment thing was unfair and totally ridiculous.

Some of the participants felt excluded by both men and women, and this was particularly distressing:

> Debra: Everyone is possessive about their spouse. So, you get the first woman on the flightline and all the guys go home and talk at the dinner table about the first woman pilot. Now you've got twenty guys [who don't think women should be flying airplanes], and twenty wives who are suspicious. So when you're in the officer's mess, you don't get support from the men's side, or the women's side.

Other participants also reported that lack of support from women in general was a hurtful experience for them.

I'm Searching for Myself: Have You Seen Me Anywhere?

The participants in this study maintained their flying careers at considerable personal cost to themselves. Their stories reveal that in response to the hostile workplace environment they experienced diminished confidence in their flying ability, a tendency towards blaming themselves for not handling their situations well, and feelings of self-doubt which led to an erosion of their self-esteem. They experienced a great deal of stress, and when they reacted to their work

environment their feelings were invalidated. They became overburdened with the struggle for acceptance while having to simultaneously perform their flying duties.

Don't Rock the Boat (or Plane)

The participants were adamant that it was important that they not 'rock the boat.' This seemed related to being labelled as role deviates and token women. It was very important to them that they not be seen as troublemakers. Their perception was that if you created a fuss and complained about an incident, you would be labelled a troublemaker and have a black mark against you that would make it very difficult to work with your peers and to move about within the industry. Also, you would make it impossible for other women to get hired there. Nancy said she felt it is best "not to make any waves...[to] do the best job I can, be twice as good at my job as the men, and play their games....You don't want to cause problems and you don't want to be an instigator."

Maybe It's My Fault?

Some of the participants conveyed a tendency to blame themselves for their situations, or for not responding to the harassment appropriately. This was Molly's experience:

> It was a job I'd dreamed about for eight years....I had worked up north, and got the flying experience I needed, so that I could apply for this great job....It turned out to be the worst job I've ever had because of the discrimination and harassment. I just started blaming myself for it all, saying maybe I didn't deserve this job, maybe I'm not really qualified....I almost quit.

Sarah described the continuous questioning of her credibility as very demoralizing:

> As a woman, you never get any positive feedback....It's hard to re-play the negative tapes all the time...[and] very hard on the self-esteem. You begin to wonder about yourself and your competence...whether you should even be there at all. It causes a lot of internal commotion.

Sometimes the participants blamed themselves for not taking action over the discrimination or harassment. This is how two of the participants described the self-battering:

> Sarah: I've lost respect for myself regarding how I've dealt with these [sexual harassment] problems. I feel I could have dealt with them in a better way...maybe been more assertive, instead of ignoring or minimizing them. It's very demeaning to myself.
>
> Molly: You get angry at yourself because you know you should point out these things, but you get tired of pointing them out and drawing attention to yourself. So you let things go by, and then you get down on yourself for not saying something. It wrecks your day, and it ruins how you feel about yourself.

I Don't Know What to Feel

The participants reported that one of the most difficult aspects of being a woman pilot was the amount of stress they endure. The occupation is stressful in itself, because of the periodic proficiency checks and technical demands. Added to this is the stress that arises from dealing with the discrimination and harassment, and from having one's feelings invalidated. Sarah said it is very hard on one emotionally:

> Because you've heard so often that women shouldn't be pilots, you have the extra stress of being a perfectionist. You want to do really well on your check rides. Then you have to constantly suppress your feelings as well. Continually ignoring [the harassment] is very hard on you. It stores up inside if you're not dealing with it, and comes out as emotional and health problems. It's a tremendous price to pay.

Nancy described it in this way:

> It's like a timebomb ticking...you can't show any emotion because that's a female trait and in this industry, it is seen as a weakness. One day I walked into the chief pilot's office because it was bothering me that they wouldn't let me be captain on the Chieftan, when I was qualified for it. I told him I thought this discrimination was inappropriate--I was angry. He responded by saying "Nancy, this is exactly the reason why you can't be a captain--because of your anger. You're not mature enough to be a captain."

Another time, this same woman complained about sexism on the job and was told by her superior, "Women are more sexist than men...you need to take a walk down the hall and cool off." Since her feelings of anger about being treated unfairly were used against her, she learned to suppress her anger:

> I'll get angry but I'm biting my tongue because I want to handle it...in a professional manner. I ask myself, "How would a guy handle it...how can I handle it so I look professional?" But this situation isn't likely to happen to a man, so it's completely ridiculous.

I'm Tired and I Want To Go Home

It seemed that the accumulative effect of the abuse was tiresome and wore these women down. Samantha remembered one flight where she finally exploded:

> He was one of our senior captains. He knew all the sexist jokes...kept telling them one after another. I tried to ignore it...went into my own little world and read some operational charts....After a while it just grates on you and the tension builds up....They thrive on that...but inside me the stress builds up. I had flown with him all month. Then this young fellow, the son of an airline employee, came up to the flightdeck and the three of them were going at it with jokes about women. I just snapped. I turned around and said to him, "I may have to take this from the captain...but I certainly don't have to take it from you. You can sit there and shut up or you can get out of the flightdeck now." There was silence. This young fellow hadn't known what I had put up with all month from the captain and he turned around and was totally apologetic. He said "I'm sorry ma'am." They always call you ma'am when they don't know what to say to you. The captain was quiet. Basically, I had been taking this abuse from the captain all month and there was no way I could get away from it.

All of the participants said they had found it exhausting to carry a double burden of two jobs: firstly, performing their flying duties and, secondly, struggling for acceptance and fighting the discrimination and harassment:

> Emily: When you put up with this every day, it drags you down. You get tired of the hassle. You have to keep jerking yourself up and telling yourself "Yeah, I can do this." A weariness sets in. So much of your energy goes into getting the job, then surviving in it. I'm kind of wary...I've hardened a lot because of these experiences. I've lost my sense of humour, and that's what I regret most of all. I'm not sure I would ever go into aviation again because the price is too high.

Participants expressed a concern that their exhaustion from the double burden, and their unwillingness to subject themselves to more negative experiences, has affected their mobility within the industry. They are reluctant to take on new positions, or to move to new companies, because they will have to start all over again with the struggle for acceptance, proving themselves capable, and enduring more harassment:

> Emily: I can't face starting all over again in a new workplace--where I would have to prove that I belong and that I'm capable. I can't handle the harassment that goes with trying to fit into a new male-dominated work group. I would have to integrate myself

> and that experience would shake me up. A new position just wouldn't seem like fun anymore. I'd rather stay where I am, where I've finally gained acceptance even if it means losing out on a new exciting opportunity. I said this to a man who wanted to hire me into a great new job flying water bombers. It's a position in this province where they've never had a woman before. He acknowledged there might be some struggle for acceptance initially, but he said he thought the flack would settle down pretty fast due to my extensive flying experience and my credibility in the industry. It's too bad a woman needs 25 years of success in the industry to be deemed credible and to escape the flack from male pilots. So I'm staying where I am and giving up this opportunity. It's a matter of weighing the personal costs of starting over again in a very hurtful work environment. The bottom line for me is, "How much more do I want to expose myself to the hurt?"

The Good Guys

In spite of their negative experiences, the participants pointed out that some individual men had been supportive and encouraging to them. They had found this support to be very important and empowering to them. Often, this support came from men who were, as Samantha put it: "younger pilots, who looked at things more equally, and knew the world was changing". Molly found that there were a few men who were supportive. "Some of the pilots took mercy on me... took me under their wings and made me feel welcome." Here's what Sarah had to say about support from male colleagues:

> The owner of the airline was terrible...but there was a captain that I flew with who was an incredible man and when I flew with him there was no sexual harassment at all...so it was a gamble as to who I got to fly with and whether I would feel safe or not.

Sarah also witnessed situations where sexually explicit visuals had been put into checklists and "one of the men got extremely angry, ripped them to bits and seemed totally disgusted with them." This reaction, she said, was "extremely validating."

Emily reflected upon her upward progress within the industry and saw that she and her female colleagues had occasionally received the back-up of a man when they needed it. "Sometimes [a woman pilot's progress] was dependent upon a benevolent male deciding to support her...either he thought she was a novelty, or he liked her, or he just thought she should have a chance. I've had help in the industry from

individual men who gave me a helping hand....There were a number of jobs that I got with the help of a specific male.

Conclusion

These stories reveal the complexity of sexual harassment for women pilots. Seen as invading a male culture, they work in an environment in which they are denied opportunities and are treated differently than their male peers. Perceived as a threat to male power, they are labelled as oddballs and token women, and are subjected to sexual objectification.

The organizational context and culture of the aviation industry is conducive to harassing behaviours. Flying is mysterious and glamorous to most people, granting power and prestige to those who become pilots. To people who see flying as a man's domain, it becomes problematic when a woman take the controls of an airplane, thus demystifying the pilot's role.

The nature of the work requires teamwork and trust among pilots, which is easily shattered by the poisoned environment created by sexual harassment. Women pilots experience ostracism from their male co-workers, while being physically separated from their gender peers. Moreover, the aviation industry's grapevine makes women especially visible and vulnerable; their actions are constantly monitored. As well, they are faced with jumping through hoops created by their male peers, while simultaneously jumping through those of a hierarchical, strictly-regulated industry.

These women pilots make a concerted effort to avoid being labelled a trouble-maker and often blame themselves for their predicaments. The accumulated effect of the discrimination and the burden of fighting the harassment--while meeting the demands of a highly technical and complex job--lead them to become weary and to wonder if it is all worth it.

However, they are buoyed occasionally by the support of individual men in the industry, who offer them a helping hand.

These themes represent the lived experience of the participants. They are like the layers of an onion: overlapping and translucent. In this chapter, I peeled off one layer at a time...and sometimes I cried.

Chapter Five: Discussion and Recommendations

Discussion

The original purpose of this study was to explore (a) the sexual harassment experiences of women pilots, (b) how they respond to harassment, and (c) what factors influence those responses. These questions were appropriate to get me started in the study, and to develop the interview guide; however, they did not go far enough. I soon began to realize how intricate and complex the experience of sexual harassment is for women pilots. The data revealed an inter-related set of behaviours and a unique organizational culture. This gave me a much deeper understanding of the intransigence and pervasiveness of this phenomena and of its interwoven nature. I now have answers much deeper than the original questions.

In Chapter Two, I said that feminist theory provides a good theoretical basis for understanding sexual harassment (Backhouse & Cohen, 1978; Kanter, 1976; Lafontaine & Tredeau, 1986; Livingston, 1982; Loy & Stewart, 1984; MacKinnon, 1979; Millet, 1970; Stock, 1991). My study confirms this, since the participants experienced sexual harassment as an abuse of power by peers and superiors. This power was derived not only from male privilege in a patriarchal society, but also from the hierarchical nature of the aviation industry.

My study revealed a dimension of power that I did not discover in the literature. This additional aspect of power was derived from the occupational status of being a pilot, an elitist position with power ascribed to it by members of our society. The question arose from this study: "Who gets to do this work?" Pilots are primarily white, male, and middle to upper middle class. The dimensions of power described above are used to ensure that women do not get to do this work without a struggle.

Earlier (in Chapter Two), I identified the sex-role spillover model (Gutek, 1985; Gutek & Morasch, 1982) as being potentially useful for explaining the sexual harassment of women pilots. My study reveals that these women pilots were stereotyped as sex role deviates. Society assumes that people in pilot jobs ought to have 'male' characteristics. The sex role and work role are incongruent for women pilots. Participants found it especially hurtful to have the label of role deviate enforced by other women. Because their general work environment is so hostile and invalidating, they felt they needed the support and encouragement of other women. They also found it problematic to be labelled as 'not normal' and as lesbians within an industry that appears to be highly judgemental and homophobic.

Earlier in the thesis, I described how token women are often seen to represent women in general (Hemming, 1985). Participants in my study confirmed this phenomenon, and found it to be problematic. Lack of success on the part of one woman pilot was used to discriminate against other women who followed in their footsteps. My participants had learned this, and therefore felt extreme pressure to succeed and not let other women down. This led them to tolerate sexual harassment that they otherwise might have complained about. At times they were labelled as tokens because of the perception that they had not 'earned their stripes'--that they were there only because they were women. This led them to jump through many hoops constructed by their male peers and superiors, in order to prove that they were capable and belonged. These hoops were in addition to the formal demands of a highly regulated industry that all pilots must fullfil in order to maintain proficiency.

I also described in chapter two, how women moving into historically all-male occupations are likely to be targets of extreme and concerted forms of sexual harassment (Backhouse & Cohen, 1978; Gruber, 1992; Gutek, 1985; Gutek & Morasch, 1982; MacKinnon, 1979). The results of my study confirm this contention. The participants

experienced sexual assaults, threats, sexual objectification, sabotage, unwanted sexual attention, sexually explicit visuals, and innuendo. Many factors contributed to the stereotyping and exclusion, thereby ensuring that women were marginalized, put under severe stress, remained in lower status positions, or left the industry altogether. These factors included a vicious grapevine, isolation, hierarchical decision-making, and a wide range of concerted efforts to keep them 'in their place.'

However, my study also revealed that these sexual harassing behaviours are ubiquitous and must be viewed in the context of a generally hostile work environment, in which women pilots continually receive messages that they are not wanted and do not belong. It does a disservice to women pilots to 'lift' episodes of sexual harassment out of the context of the pervasive gender discrimination in which the episodes take place. These incidents most often take place in isolation from their peers, and behind closed doors; at a time when the women are engaged in performing the duties of a highly demanding and technical position that is safety-sensitive. This makes their impact particularly hurtful and stressful; and creates a sense of powerlessness.

This study raises the question of why this stereotyping occurs with such vigour in the aviation industry. The participants shed some light on this, indicating that the purpose of the stereotypes is to ensure that women do not gain a foothold in the profession, or, if they do, that they do not obtain senior positions. Overall, the stereotyping allows men to view women as a group--as objects rather than subjects--and to treat them in ways that differ substantially from how they would treat their male peers. It appears that the reason for marginalizing women pilots is to ensure that a prestigious, white collar domain for men is preserved so that they can benefit from the occupational power that flows from this position.

The literature on women in non traditional occupations primarily discusses blue collar workers. The participants confirmed the work of Kanter (1976), Lafontaine (1986), and Davidson and Earnshaw (1991) regarding the influence of sex ratios in the workplace on sexual harassment incidence. However, my study reveals that women in white collar work in male-dominated occupations experience the added dimension of power related to the status of the work, and to who gets to do this work. In Chapter Two, I referred to the 'outsider' issue with respect to blue collar work, in which Walshok (1981) and Braid (1994) argue that there is a tradition of harassing rookies. It appears to be different in male-dominated workplaces where the work being done is at a professional or technical level. Participants were adamant that the harassment was closely connected to a woman entering an elitist male domain, rather than a simple tradition of harassing the 'new kid on the block.' The stories of my participants confirm Gruber's (1992) findings about non-traditional women in white collar work: that lower self-esteem is linked to the experience of being sexually harassed. Participants clearly believed that as a result of their hostile work environment, their 'sense of self' had been eroded, and their self-confidence diminished; sometimes to the point of feeling like an imposter.

Chapter Two provides a historical account of women in aviation. Over several decades, women aspiring to be pilots have been disadvantaged, excluded and sabotaged. What struck me in particular is that the stories of my participants echo those of the early women fliers. For example, women entering air races in the 1930s endured news articles about women being 'unsuitable for flying,' and they described incidents of sabotage to prevent them from participating in aviation events. They also experienced the discomfort of being assigned token status and being put on a pedestal, leading to resentment from male fliers. Today's stories sound alarmingly similar: in some cases the

words from 1994 are almost interchangeable with those from 1930. It saddened me to learn that 'we haven't come a long way, baby.'

In the literature review, I described the dearth of information on the sexual harassment of women pilots. However, Wentworth (1994) provided some data that coincides with my findings. Women airline pilots who participated in her survey had identified that gender discrimination was a major problem, slightly higher in incidence than sexual harassment. This fits with the stories of my participants, in which they describe an anti-female work environment where they have had to struggle for acceptance and to continually prove their capabilities in spite of being highly-qualified and experienced pilots. Like Wentworth's participants, the women pilots in my study were often denied opportunities and treated differently than their male counterparts, and the sexual harassment episodes must be viewed in this context.

The organizational context and culture of aviation greatly enhances the complexity of sexual harassment for women pilots. They pay a high price for demystifying a glamorous, high-status job that is portrayed as difficult and requiring 'male' characteristics. They are expected to function in a teamwork environment with men who clearly see them as sex objects, who sabotage their efforts to 'fit in', and who question their authority. These women are extremely visible because of their small numbers, and the tightly-knit aviation community which has a grapevine that is frequently used to discredit women pilots.

In an industry which is highly regulated and hierarchical, they are required to go through two sets of hoops: formal ones established by the federal government and industry to maintain their proficiencies and licences, and informal ones set up by their male peers to force them to prove their right to belong to an elitist male domain. When participants asserted their right to work in a harassment and sexism-free work environment, they found the hierarchical nature of the industry, managed in a top-down manner by male superiors, to be very

disempowering. They were not supported in carrying complaints forward, and in most cases were ostracized or punished.

Participants felt disempowered by what they perceived as sexism and sexual harassment on the part of the Transport Canada inspectors who regulate the industry. Not only did they relate personal experiences with individual inspectors; they said that they and their female colleagues perceived most Transport Canada inspectors to be sexist and lacking in awareness on sexual harassment issues. The participants attributed this situation to be primarily the result of the predominance of older, ex-military men in inspector roles. It is clear that Transport Canada officials need to begin a self-examination of sexism and related issues within their ministry.

There previously have been questions raised about the suitability of filling Transport Canada's inspector positions with predominantly ex-military males. Clifford (1988)--writing for the Law Reform Commission of Canada--pointed this out, reporting that many aviation inspectors have been recruited from the Department of National Defence and from police forces, and that "the private sector orientations are not always well understood by police and military airmen" (p. 32). The Law Reform Commission did not identify sexism as a reason to question the hiring, although it did acknowledge that "obtaining and maintaining a competent corps of inspectors is a perennial concern" (p. 31).

The Canadian Owners and Pilots Association (Wilson, 1989) analyzed the responses to several hundred questionnaires distributed to its membership and found that, among its membership, Transport Canada has a serious image problem. It found the federal agency was not meeting the needs of general aviation. This fits with the complaints of the participants, many of whom started out their flying careers working for small bush and charter companies, or for flight schools where an inspector's military background may not have been relevant.

Participants expressed concern about the power inherent within the

role performed by Transport Canada inspectors within a sexist industry. It was the potential abuse of this power that made them feel especially vulnerable in situations of discrimination or harassment. It is important to note that on occasion, participants identified positive experiences and relationships with inspectors from Transport Canada.

Because of the hierarchical issues raised above, the participants did not feel safe about complaining about the harassment, so they chose to respond in less assertive ways: by ignoring it, suppressing their feelings, becoming anxious or ill, quitting their jobs, and turning down opportunities in order to avoid starting out in a new workplace. This passive response and the feelings of helplessness that emerged, resulted in what one participant described as "a lot of internal commotion" and invalidation. These feelings were experienced in isolation from their gender peers, and led to very high stress levels and weariness for the participants. Their mobility within the industry was hampered, since they chose not to expose themselves to more hurt, and therefore turned down exciting new opportunities in the aviation industry.

This disempowerment and helplessness is likely to be reinforced by recent developments in unemployment-insurance legislation. In 1993, the federal government implemented amendments to the Unemployment Insurance Act which may be especially problematic for women who are sexually harassed in male-dominated workplaces. The legislation denies benefits to workers who voluntarily quit their jobs without just cause (Canadian Press., 1993). While sexual harassment is considered just cause for quitting a job, opponents to the legislation argued that there will be "reverse onus" situations in which claimants will have to prove that they do have just cause, a process that could prove to be a financial and emotional hardship (Parsons, 1993). This study supports the views of those who opposed the legislation by demonstrating how difficult it might be for a women pilot to <u>prove</u> her case of sexual harassment. In addition to doing her work in a hostile environment, she is likely to be

physically separated from her same sex peers, and to be ostracised by her male peers, if she files a complaint. My study has also revealed that she is unlikely to receive support from her superior. Therefore, proving her case to the Unemployment Commission (UIC) could be extremely difficult. A dialogue needs to be initiated between UIC and aviation officials with respect to acknowledging the difficulty that women in male-dominated occupations will experience in proving complaints. This dialogue should include discussions about ways in which to train UIC front line workers and aviation officials in the dynamics of harassment in male-dominated occupations. This training has the potential to benefit women working in a range of occupations beyond pilot jobs.

There is a need for sexual harassment policies and procedures to be put into place within the industry. Transport Canada should re-visit its mandate in this regard, and as the participants said, 'clean up their own act'. Next, Transport Canada should put in place requirements for the aviation industry to have policies and procedures in place as part of their operational requirements. These policies must be made visible to a geographically dispersed workforce. Educational sessions on sexual harassment should be mandatory, and disciplinary measures must be put into place and enforced so that perpetuators of sexual harassment become aware that this behaviour will not be tolerated.

The participants conveyed that they would find it very helpful to have a sexual harassment advisor available to whom they could take their concerns. This should be a female advisor who is located outside the regular hierarchy of the company. Contracts with outside consultants, similar to contracted Employee Assistance Programs, could be implemented. This advisor should be a woman with expertise on sexual harassment and an understanding of the organizational context and culture of aviation. Participants expressed interest in having a former woman pilot in this capacity.

Transport Canada should consider developing a position within each region with responsibility for workplace harassment issues. This person could be responsible for policy development and implementation, liaison with industry, and developing and delivering educational strategies. This individual could also explore possible inter-agency projects involving the unions, women pilot groups, and employers. Since participants identified homophobia and racism within the industry, this person's job description could include responsibility for general harassment, as well as harassment based on sex, race and sexual orientation.

Policy development should be done using a backward-mapping approach (Elmore, 1983). This method challenges the traditional top-down ways of doing policy work. Backward mapping involves starting at the bottom of the hierarchy. "It begins with a specific behaviour at the lowest level of the policy implementation process that generates a need for a policy" (p. 21). This means that women pilots would be consulted first about their needs with respect to sexual harassment policies in their workplaces; and asked to articulate what would work best for them, in their particular environment. Given the unique characteristics of their work environment, this approach is essential.

If Transport Canada has any doubts about the need for taking action with respect to sexual harassment, they should view it from a safety standpoint. The participants strongly identified that they felt sexual harassment hampered their ability to concentrate on their flight duties, and created an atmosphere in the cockpit that is stressful and lacking in trust. Teamwork and cooperation is essential in the cockpit, and participants felt these two concepts were negatively affected by sexism and sexual harassment among their peers and their superiors. Female captains expressed safety concerns about having their authority questioned by male co-pilots who were reluctant to take orders from a woman. This is a cockpit resource management issue. Major companies

have cockpit resource management programs aimed at ensuring that all crew resources are managed effectively, and that crew members feel safe in coming forward and contributing to decision-making and safe flight operations. Women pilots cannot contribute fully in an environment of harassment and sexism. Cockpit resource management courses should be expanded to include discussion on discrimination and harassment issues. This expanded curriculum should include sexual harassment, and harassment related to homophobia and racism. Companies that do not have cockpit resource management courses should see that their employees receive this training through some other vehicle.

Curiously, the theme of safety emerged in two different ways in this study. Firstly, women reported that men used concern about safety in the air as a rationale for excluding women that were perceived to be unqualified, from participating in the industry. In other words, the misappropriation of safety standards was used as a tool to keep these female 'invaders' out. On the other hand, safety emerged as an issue for the women, in terms of the harassment creating an unsafe cockpit environment, and diminished physical and emotional health, as a result of a hostile work environment. The industry and those who regulate it need to explore these issues further. The Worker's Compensation Boards may be intersted in participating in this dialogue.

It is apparent from my study that isolation from gender peers is a major problem for the particiants. Women pilots need an opportunity to connect with each other, and to network and discuss gender issues. This will be a challenge for the industry. However, opportunities to facilitate this do exist. Companies and Transport Canada should seek ways to facilitate attendance at conferences by women pilots.

Professional women pilots in Canada are not well organized. However, one third of the membership of the International Organization of Women Pilots, officially called The Ninety-Nines, is comprised of women pilots who fly commercially. This organization was started by

Amelia Earhart in 1929 with 99 charter members. The organization has Western Canada and Eastern Canada sections; and could be used as a vehicle for development work on sexual harassment issues. In addition to this organization, there is a fledgling group of women employed professionally in aviation in a variety of roles, including pilots, aircraft mechanics and air traffic controllers; who have started to organize bi-annual national conferences to discuss aviation issues.

This group needs financial and organizational support, and would be an excellent means through which women pilots could build coalitions and support each other. Newsletters could be developed to assist women pilots with keeping in touch, and increasing awareness on issues of concern to them. Some of the participants had tried to raise gender issues through their union and were rebuffed. They reported sexism and harassment within the union itself, calling it an 'old boys network'. Therefore, liaison and development work with the unions is an important task.

This study has also illuminated a policy dilemma. One would assume that since the participants were affected by the low proportion of women pilots in the workforce, and their isolation from gender peers, it would be helpful to increase the number of women pilots hired, in order to achieve a critical mass. At first glance, it would be logical to consider implementation of affirmative action programs. However, the participants were adamantly opposed to this idea. Two of them had been hired under a bridging program for women. They experienced resentment from their male peers, based on the assumption that standards had been lowered in order to let them in; and that they were not qualified. Concerted efforts were made to remove them from the workplace. There were claims made that the women were a safety hazard. These, and other arguments were used to continuously harass and discredit them. Other participants who had observed the experiences of colleagues who had been hired under affirmative action said they too, were opposed to such

programs because of the backlash towards the women who were hired. It appears that all of the harassing behaviours that typically exist in aviation, increase in nature and vigour when the women are brought in under special programs. The policy dilemma is that these women, who are already isolated and vulnerable, are put at greater risk of harassment if these programs are put into place. Yet, the critical mass is not likely to be achieved unless hiring opportunities are increased. It might be more appropriate to allocate resources towards making the existing work environment more woman friendly, and removing subtle sexism from the hiring processes, rather than implementing affirmative action programs.

It is not clear to me whether the women I interviewed are familiar with the historical accounts of the women pilots that have gone before them. I did not explore with them whether they are familiar with the legacy of discrimination and achievement, and whether they feel that they owe a debt to these earlier women. It seems to me that it would be useful to make this history visible to women pilots. By knowing about past struggles and the barriers that were overcome, they may feel a connection to the past and be inspired to carry on the fight. Through learning about the remarkable achievements of their sisters during the early years, (for example that women flew huge military aircraft during the war); they may begin to feel less like oddballs, and more confident about their own abilities and aspirations. We need to acknowledge the power inherent in retrieving and re-examining this history, and take steps to make the stories from the past visible as a means to further demystify the role today.

My study also highlighted some ways in which women are silenced. During the initial phases of my project when participants were self-selecting themselves, I was approached by women pilots who said they had been victims of harassment and would like to share their stories, but were afraid of the repercussions from their employers and male co-

workers. They wanted me to know that there were more women out there with experiences to share. Two of these women worked for Transport Canada.

As the researcher, I also felt silenced. I was unable to reveal all the details of the women's stories, due to the necessity of protecting their identities. There are so few women pilots working in specific categories of pilot jobs in Canada, that to reveal details of the nature of their work, could lead to blowing their cover of anonymity. In some instances, a participant would reveal an experience to me, then ask to have the details of it changed or deleted from the transcript out of fear of repercussions if the episode were made public.

Impact of the Research on the Participants and the Researcher

As mentioned in Chapter Three, I recognized that asking women to re-live their sexual harassment experiences could initiate intense emotional feelings; therefore, I offered each participant the opportunity of a debriefing session in the days following the interview. This follow-up session also provided a chance for them to clarify any information they had given me, or to add any new thoughts that had arisen. I did three face-to-face debriefings, and the rest were telephone contacts. Three of the women had some brief clarifications they wished to share. They all briefly discussed how participating in the research had affected them. Debra said she had been unable to sleep the night after her interview because it had stirred up so many memories that she had stuffed down. Nancy commented:

> God, this brought back a lot of stuff for me. Reviewing all this made me angry...my feelings resurfaced. However, now I feel empowered by the interview and the opportunity to talk about all this stuff...I feel less a victim. It has helped me to let go of a lot of things. I guess it was cathartic. And now we're [some of the participants] getting together...I think that's great.

Sarah said she sensed that participating in the interview had been positive for her:

> It has led me to reflect a lot on my work experience and my life. It has provided me with more clarity...an opportunity for clarification of things like how power imbalances affect our working relationships between men and women and on gender issues. I feel empowered; as a result of the interview I now know that I don't have to put up with this abuse anymore. [Participating in the study] has led me to make some decisions about my working conditions, values, personal and career goals...and to reflect on what's really important to me.

Emily said she developed some new realizations after the interview:

> The interview also affected me emotionally. Reviewing my experiences made me more angry about what happened to me as a woman pilot. It all seems so unfair. But it was helpful to talk about it...to be asked to tell my story and to feel heard. Participating in the study helped me to reframe my situation. After the interview, I developed a realization that I have a right to feel tired and worn out. I've been doing two jobs at once...flying the airplanes and carrying out my job duties, in addition to fighting discrimination and harassment. I haven't just had a 25 year career in aviation, I've had 25 years of sex discrimination and sexual harassment.

During the data analysis phase of the study, I met with four of the participants, at the suggestion of one of them. We talked about how the study had affected them, and about some of the issues. We discussed a recent article in Times-Colonist (Wilson, 1994) about the prejudice in the City of Victoria's fire department as outlined in a recent survey, and about how closely the male culture in the fire department resembled the culture in which they worked as woman pilots. We discussed how a hostile work environment in the firehall would hamper women's progress, in spite of the Fire Chief's good intentions to hire the department's first woman fire fighter. One group member proposed writing a letter about the fire department's situation, drawing upon insights gained from my study.

At the end of the meeting, one of the participants noted that this was the first time she had talked about these gender issues with several other women pilots, and how empowering it was. She and the others expressed a wish to get together regularly to discuss these issues. The group hopes to meet once a month. It seems apparent from the follow-up contacts with the participants that the interview actually served as a therapeutic intervention, in that the women identified changes in their

perceptions and opportunities as a result of participating in the study. They also began to network and discuss the issues, and to develop plans for social action; therefore my study has positive, although unintended, outcomes. In the future, with this type of study, I would probably build into the research design, at least one follow-up interview with each participant and perhaps, a focus group. Reinharz (1992) reports that data from multiple interviews is likely to be more accurate because you get to ask additional questions and to get corrective feedback. I would also see this as an opportunity to gather the interviewees' reactions to their participation in the study; and to begin to launch some social action.

As the researcher, I found that I was emotionally affected by conducting the interviews. I experienced a wide range of feelings as a result of hearing these women's stories, including sadness, frustration, horror, and anger. As their stories continued to unfold, and the research study continued, a sense of rage arose within me. Listening to their experiences led me to re-live my own earlier experiences of harassment in the aviation industry. I experienced a profound sense of disillusionment at how little progress has been made. I sought out colleagues with good listening skills to debrief with me. If I were to conduct further studies of this nature, I would build into the research design, structured debriefing sessions for the interviewer.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study has revealed several areas for further research. One of these ideas came from the participants, who acknowledged that they were women with considerable flying hours and many years in the industry. They wondered about the experiences of less-seasoned women pilots, for example those who are just starting out as First Officers in a highly-competitive job market. Participants saw themselves as 'survivors with broad shoulders and strong backbones'. They also

acknowledged that their extensive flying experience had helped them to carve a niche for themselves in a hostile world. They did not think it should be necessary for a woman to be exceptional, or eminently qualified, in order to succeed in the industry. The question they raised was:

> Aren't we going to run out of exceptional, strong women? What about the younger, new women coming behind us? If we, as experienced women in the industry, are experiencing this stuff, and we're eminently qualified for the job, can you imagine what horrendous experiences they must be having?

These are good questions which need to be explored in further studies.

Two of the pilots whom I interviewed had been former flight attendants. They revealed that flight attendants have low status and are low paid in the aviation industry, and that flight attendants are the recipients of sexual harassment from airline passengers as well as from their superiors. This population, which is primarily female, needs to be studied.

It would be interesting to interview men in the aviation industry with respect to their views on the issues that have been raised by the women in this study. The particiants said that their male co-workers perceived harassment differently than the women did. Illuminating the men's perceptions would be helpful in developing strategies for change. Consciousness-raising with men, to raise awareness and to point out the importance of not condoning the harassment through their silence, would also be beneficial. It is very empowering for women when men speak up on their behalf. Men need to know this, and they need help in building support for themselves from other men, because of the 'pack mentality.' Men in positions of authority who are expected to support female complainants need to receive organizational and gender support in order to do this work.

Another area that needs to be explored is the attitudes and behaviours among the group of (mostly male) inspectors within Transport Canada. The participants were concerned about the lack of awareness on

the part of these civil servants with respect to sex discrimination and sexual harassment issues. Studies within this ministry need to be conducted. Two women who work as inspectors for Transport Canada, but did not participate in this study, reported that sexual harassment is rampant in their departments. They are reluctant to speak out about the situation due to the potential for reprisal. These, and other women in the department need an opportunity to be heard. In addition, it would be worthwhile to explore the reasons behind the predominance of males in Transport Canada inspector and safety officer positions, examining the recruiting process and job descriptions with respect to bona fide job requirements and male bias.

The results of my study point to the need for more qualitative research on the lived experience of women employed in white collar, professional roles in male-dominated work settings. Studies on the experiences of women in male-dominated fields such as marine and rail operations, engineering, medicine, mathematics, and science, for example, would make an important contribution.

This study has shone a beam of light on the sexual harassment of six women pilots, revealing the complex nature of their experiences in the workplace. In sharing their stories, the women have pin-pointed other areas of their work lives that need to be explored. Sexuality was raised, but not investigated in this study. The participants alluded to the need to suppress their femininity in order to be accepted. They described it as a balancing act. If they appeared to be too feminine, they would be deemed a sex object and not competent to do 'a man's job'; and if they appeared to be too masculine, they were seen as 'butches' and undesirable. Some of the interviewees felt that this ambivalance over their sexuality spilled over into their personal relationships, and raised issues about their self-concepts. There needs to be further work done to investigate these issues of sexuality for women in male-dominated occupations.

The issue of sexual orientation also arose during my study, but was not explored in depth. While interviewees described the industry as homophobic and talked about the negative aspects of being labelled a lesbian, further work needs to be done on homophobia and the need to stay closeted if you are a pilot. This is related to the issue of silencing which was discussed earlier, and has has implications for male and female pilots, as well as for flight attendants.

In summary, I would hope that my study will serve as a catalyst for further research about gender relations within the aviation industry. My work has revealed that if we were going to develop a recipe for sexual harassment, the aviation workplace has all the ingredients. It is a place where the men are made very powerful by virtue of their elite occupational status, their gender, and their privileged place in aviation history. They also enjoy organizational power due to a hierarchical, para-military industry. The women are marginalized and isolated. They can't talk to other women pilots and they have difficulty communicating with male pilots who perceive them as invaders and sex objects. Yet, communication and trust is essential because pilots' lives, as well as the lives of their passengers, are dependent upon effective teamwork. These women work extended duty hours, and do their work behind closed doors, often with their male superior sitting next to them. This is the tapestry that represents the lived experience of women pilots. It is hoped that those who read this study will be inspired to make changes so that <u>all of us,</u> including women pilots, can fly among blue skies and tailwinds.

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APPENDIX A

INFORMATION SHEET FOR POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS

SEXUAL HARASSMENT EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN PILOTS IN CANADA

Sexual harassment is a pervasive and serious workplace phenomenon which is a source of concern to most working women. Awareness of sexual harassment has grown over the past decade, and it has been found that women who are moving into occupations which have been historically all-male find they, even more than other women are targets of extreme and concerted forms of sexual harassment. Very little research has been done on the sexual harassment experiences of women in aviation, and women pilots in particular.

Under-reporting of sexual harassment has been an issue in traditional occupations, and it is possible that under-reporting of sexual harassment incidents is an even greather issue for women in male-dominated occupations. I am interested in finding out whether responding to sexual harassment incidents is especially problematic for women pilots.

This study is aimed at learning about the experiences of women pilots in responding to sexual harassment in their aviation workplaces. My purpose is to learn whether the responses of women pilots to sexual harassment--reporting or non-reporting of the incident--are influenced by the unique characteristics of a male-dominated aviation workplace, and to develop an understanding of the factors which influence those responses. The initial impetus for this study came out of my own personal experiences gained while working in the aviation industry as a commercial pilot and operations manager.

Participants are being invited to participate in intensive, in-depth interviews conducted by myself. About five women pilots will be interviewed on an individual, face-to-face format. During these interviews I am committed to gathering information that will help me to develop an understanding of the social phenomenon of sexual harassment from the

victims' own perspectives. I will be seeking this understanding through the descriptive data that emerge from the interviews. I hope that in analyzing the data I will be able to develop concepts and insights about how responding to sexual harassment is problematic for the participants. This study is being done as a partial fulfillment of a Master of Social Work degree. Therefore the findings will be written up and published in the form of a thesis (using only non-identifying data), and will be presented at an oral defence seminar.

The data will be gathered using open-ended interviews. I will use a general interview guide approach which involves outlining a set of issues that are to be explored with each participant before the interviewing process begins. The interview guide will serve as a checklist so that I can be sure to cover all pertinent issues during the interview. The issues do not have to covered in any particular order. This format is based on the premise that there is common information that I would like to gather from each participant, but no standardized set of questions is established in advance. This reflects the feminist perspective that women are experts on their own experiences, and that it is preferable for the interviewer and the participant to decide together how the interview will evolve.

Participants will be asked to describe what happened to them when they were sexually harassed, and what feelings were evoked. I will be interested in hearing about ways in which participants responded to sexual harassment, and what factors influenced their decisions of how to respond when they were harassed. If participants had chosen to carry a complaint of sexual harassment forward, I will be interested in hearing what it was like for them after they filed the complaint, or reported the alleged harassment to a supervisor. If there were times when a participant chose to ignore or tolerate harassment, I would like to hear about the impact on her personally, and whether it interfered with her ability to do her work. I will also be asking participants to describe some of the characteristics of the work they do, or the environment in which they function at work,

and whether these characteristics facilitate the carrying forward of a sexual harassment complaint, or whether these characteristics make the filing of a complaint problematic.

I will be taking steps to protect the participants' right to anonymity and confidentiality. The preferred location and timing of the interviews will be discussed with the participants so that the data will be gathered at a mutually convenient setting and date. The interviews will be held in a private, comfortable room, in premises set aside for the purpose.

The interviews will be audiotaped to ensure that all the information gathered is fully and accurately captured. The information on the audiotapes will be transcribed into print data by using a computer word processing program. The original audiotapes will be stored in a locked secure place, then erased after transcription is completed and back up disks have been made. Participants will be given the option be being sent a copy of the transcribed interview and a summary of the main results of the study. Due to the nature of remembering past sexual harassment incidents, participants will have the option of contacting me after their interview if they wish to provide further information, and this information will become part of the study.

Once the interviews have been conducted, I will take steps to protect the participants' anonymity by keeping the subjects' names separate from the data through the use of a coding system which will be kept confidential, in a secure place such as a locked file cabinet, in my locked premises.

The signed consent forms will also be kept separately from the data, and stored in a secure manner. The raw data will be kept locked in a secure place to ensure confidentiality. If there are any characteristics of a participant's story that might reveal her identity, I would, at her request, change the details to disguise her identity, while maintaining the integrity of her story.

I am choosing to interview women pilots from a range of occupational roles who have been sexually harassed on the job and are willing to talk about their experiences. The women selected may occupy the role of airline or charter pilot, flight instructor, civil aviation inspector, or military pilot. I am pre-screening for women pilots who meet this criteria. I am attempting to gain access to potential participants through personal contacts with women who work in the aviation industry, and through announcements in aviation publications.

Participation in the study is voluntary. Participants will have the right to withdraw their participation in the study at any time. This would include the right to refuse to participate in any section of the interview, and to refuse to answer a particular question during the interview.

Since I will be interacting directly with the participants, asking them questions of a personal nature, there is a risk that they will experience emotional or social discomfort during and/or after the interview. Practitioners have learned that asking people to relive a sexual harassment experience could initiate intense emotional feelings.

Some participants may also decide that they wish to deal with a past unresolved incident of sexual harassment by carrying a complaint forward after it has been raised during the interview. I recognize the possibility of such effects and am prepared to help these participants by identifying supports. I will be prepared to provide a referral to an employee assistance professional or private practitioner who is familiar with sexual harassment issues; and to advise participants of their options for pursuing a complaint under human rights legislation. I am also willing to link participants with each other for mutual support, with the prior permission of each participant. It is my belief that the potential discomfort is outweighed by the potential benefits of having the participants' stories made visible, and the possibility that effective strategies for change might be implemented as a result of the study.

I will be conducting this research from October, 1993 to July 31,1994. Before deciding whether you wish to be a participant in this study, please consider all of the information provided above, and ask me any questions that arise for you. Participants will be asked to sign an informed consent form. If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact myself, (Roberta Taylor) or my thesis supervisor, Professor Barbara Whittington at the addresses and telephone numbers listed below. Thank you for your interest in this study.

Roberta Taylor,
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University of Victoria,
Box 1700,
Victoria B.C.
V8W 2Y2

Phone (604) 721-8046

Professor Barbara Whittington,
School of Social Work
University of Victoria,
Box 1700,
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Phone (604) 721-8044

APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY: SEXUAL HARASSMENT EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN PILOTS

The university and those conducting this study subscribe to the ethical conduct of research and to the protection at all times of the interests, comfort and safety of research participants. Your signature on this form will signify that you have received a written description of the project, and that you have had adequate opportunity to consider the information in that description, and that you voluntarily agree to participate in the study.

Having been asked by Roberta Taylor, a graduate student of the Faculty of Human and Social Development at the University of Victoria to participate in this study as part of her thesis work, I have read the information sheet describing the precise nature and purpose of the study on the sexual harassment experiences of women pilots. I have been given an opportunity to consider this information, and to ask questions about the study and my involvement in it. I understand that I will participate in an individual interview conducted by Roberta, during which time she will ask me about my experiences of being sexually harassed on the job. I understand the duration of this interview will be anywhere from two to four hours.

I understand that the interview will be audiotaped to ensure that all information gathered is fully and accurately captured; and that these tapes will be disposed of following completion of the study. I also understand that all the information I provide will be kept confidential and anonymous.

I understand that I may refuse to participate in this interview, and that I may withdraw from the interview at any time if I should so decide. I also understand that I may choose not to answer any particular question that I am asked during the interview.

There has been no coercion, constraint or undue inducement utilized in obtaining my agreement to participate in this study. I hereby give my voluntary agreement to participate in the study, and acknowledge receipt of a copy of the information sheet referred to above.

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Witness:

VITA

Surname: Taylor Given Names: Roberta Ellen

Place of Birth: Fort William, ON Date of Birth: January 11, 1946

Educational Institutions Attended:

University of Victoria	1987 to 1994

Degrees Awarded:

B.S.W.	University of Victoria	1992

Honours and Awards:

University of Victoria Fellowship	1992-94
President's Scholarship	1992-93
The Jess Wallace Munroe Scholarship	1992-93

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Title of Thesis: NO PILOT ON BOARD, JUST A WOMAN: Sexual Harassment Experiences of Canadian Women Pilots

Author [redacted]
(Signature)

ROBERTA ELLEN TAYLOR
(Name in Block Letters)

September 24, 1994
(Date)