

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND
ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN TOWARDS AND INTO ENTRY EXECUTIVE
LEVEL IN THE CANADIAN FEDERAL PUBLIC SERVICE

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Abstract

Women working in the Canadian Federal Public Service (CFPS) face complex issues and competing demands. However, despite challenges such as obtaining further education, managing home responsibilities, and dealing with workplace issues, some have also developed and managed successful careers. Problems highlighted within literature on career development for women relate to the nature of women's lives with their many transitional points, in which personal and organizational factors inextricably intertwine.

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to explore the career development and advancement of women towards and into entry executive level positions within the Canadian Federal Public Service (CFPS).

Three research questions guided this inquiry: 1) How have personal factors influenced career development and advancement of women in the CFPS towards and into pre-executive and entry executive levels? 2) How have organizational factors influenced their career development and advancement? and 3) How have personal and organizational factors combined to influence their career development and advancement?

This research was grounded in a social constructivist paradigm which guided the research both ontologically and epistemologically. Schwandt (1994) contends that "objective knowledge and truth is a result of perspective. Knowledge and truth are created, not discovered" (p. 125). The inquiry attempted, therefore, to understand women's complex career development processes from a holistic perspective through their career life stories. Ten women at the pre-executive or entry executive level from various departments within the CFPS took part in the study. Data collection was carried out mainly through a series of three semi-structured interviews.

The findings of the study describe how participants' personal dispositions, formal education, and home lives (personal factors) influenced their career development and advancement. In addition, it was found that the organization's culture of long hours, its support for learning, participants' organizational networks, and superiors' contributions (organizational factors) also influenced women's careers.

This study contributes to our understanding of women's career development, thereby providing important insights for future research. The study may have implications for CFPS policymakers, career counsellors, universities responsible for educating future career counsellors, as well as for individual women themselves, and perhaps even men.

Acknowledgements

This study could not have been completed without significant contributions from a number of people along the way. I would like to express my thanks to my advisor Dr. Janice Ahola-Sidaway for her professional advice and personal commitment towards guiding me through this important journey, for her high standards, as well as her knowledge and expertise in qualitative research. I wish to also sincerely thank my internal committee members Dr. Rocky Dwyer, Dr. Colla MacDonald, and Dr. Cynthia Morawski, as well as my external examiner, Dr. Helen Lam, who were all instrumental in offering important feedback.

I would like especially to express my sincere gratitude to the ten brave unnamed women who took the time, despite extremely busy schedules, to participate in this study. They trusted me with their stories and were honest and forthcoming in recollecting pivotal points in their careers. They highlighted their successes and described difficult situations so that others might learn from their experiences. Although privacy concerns have required me to occasionally alter a few details from their stories, I hope that I have adequately captured the essence of their words.

To my academic colleagues and to a former work colleague who encouraged me and helped me with problem-solving strategies and who believed in me – Thank you.

To Trevor my soulmate and best friend who didn't understand the process entirely, but who, during this stressful thesis process, took over household chores, and knew when to give me a hug or to go for a ride in his truck with our two dogs – you deserve an honorary doctorate – Thank you.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

My interest in studying the Canadian Federal Public Service (CFPS) stems from the fact that I have spent more than twenty-five years in the organization. I have always been fascinated by how women in the CFPS have developed and advanced in their careers. In 2000, for example, as part of my Masters in Education degree, I explored success strategies of women in the CFPS. When considering a topic for my PhD thesis, I felt that much more needed to be learned about the career experiences of women within this organization. In particular, I was interested in two subgroups of women: those in the feeder groups, who are eligible to make the leap into entry executive levels; and women at first level of the executive cadre, who are eligible to replace higher level executives when they retire.

Women working in the Canadian Federal Public Service (CFPS) face complex issues and competing demands, but despite challenges such as obtaining further education, managing home responsibilities, and dealing with workplace issues, some have also developed and managed successful careers. Problems highlighted within literature on career development for women relate to the nature of women's lives with their many transitional points, in which personal and organizational factors inextricably intertwine.

One major problem is that in the CFPS women are still under-represented at senior management levels. Although 53.5 percent of the overall CFPS are women, they comprise only 38.8 percent of executive level employees (Public Service Human

Resources Management Agency of Canada, [PSHRMAC, 2007]). This gender gap is both troubling and puzzling. To help ensure a fair and effective CFPS workforce, this important Canadian institution needs to tap into and nurture the skills and talents of all of its employees. For their part, more Canadian women than men are earning post-secondary credentials (Statistics Canada, 2005), and some research suggests that women are just as likely as men to aspire to executive positions (Catalyst, 2005). Yet, according to well-known scholar Linda Duxbury, retention of CFPS employees remains a serious challenge (Ottawa Citizen, 2007). More than half of the separations from the CFPS in 2005 were by women for reasons unknown. Some of these women were likely eligible to replace senior management, whose average age is 50 (PSHRMAC, 2005), when they retire within the next five to ten years through attrition.

This study aims to address this gap in our understanding and provide new insights into trends in women's careers in the CFPS by focusing on the career-related stories of two subgroups of ten women: those in pre-entry level (EX-minus-01s) and those at entry executive level (EX-01). Moreover, their career life stories explored their career progression toward these levels by examining complex issues, challenges and successes that they have experienced as they have sought to advance their careers within the Canadian Federal Public Service (CFPS).

Significance of the Study

This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge in the field of education through the career life stories of a cadre of women that have not previously been seriously considered. The findings of this study are important for succession purposes. The retention of these bright, capable women, and others like them, will be needed to

replace an aging workforce with many older baby boomer senior managers leaving the CFPS in the coming years through attrition.

Treasury Board Secretariat, policy-makers in the CFPS, and the Canada School of Public Service may gain valuable knowledge for various program development initiatives. Universities and colleges responsible for educating future career counselors and possible public servants, will likely benefit from insight provided by the women in this study. Most importantly, this study will enable those who enter the public service to learn from their experiences and insights.

Organization of the Dissertation

In addition to this introductory chapter (Chapter One), this dissertation is organized into additional chapters as follows: Chapter Two describes the conceptual framework of the study. The chapter begins with a brief history of women in the Canadian Federal Public Service as well as the CFPS Hierarchy, Acronyms, and Terminology, which provide the context for the study. Seven sensitizing concepts are used to explore academic and professional literature relevant to the overall conceptual framework of the study. These seven concepts introduce the literature that is helpful in understanding how personal and organizational factors might influence career development and advancement.

Chapter Three outlines the methodology used in the study, namely: research participants, data collection, data management and analysis, trustworthiness, limitations and delimitations, researcher as instrument, and participant profiles.

Chapters Four, Five and Six present the findings derived from the data. The findings in Chapter Four and Chapter Five focus on personal factors. Chapter Four considers personal career dispositions of participants as well as the influence of post-secondary education; Chapter Five considers the participants' lives in context. Chapter Six focuses on organizational factors that have influenced their careers.

Chapter Seven, the discussion chapter, is divided into three parts according to the study's three guiding research questions; the first examines personal factors, the second examines organizational factors, and the third considers a combination of the two that have contributed towards shaping women's careers in the CFPS. The discussion highlights in various ways the links between the findings and relevant literature.

Chapter Eight serves to reassemble the pieces of the puzzle through concluding comments highlighting the key themes and insights that have emerged from this study. It also provides an opportunity for reflection and highlights implications of the study.

CHAPTER 2

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

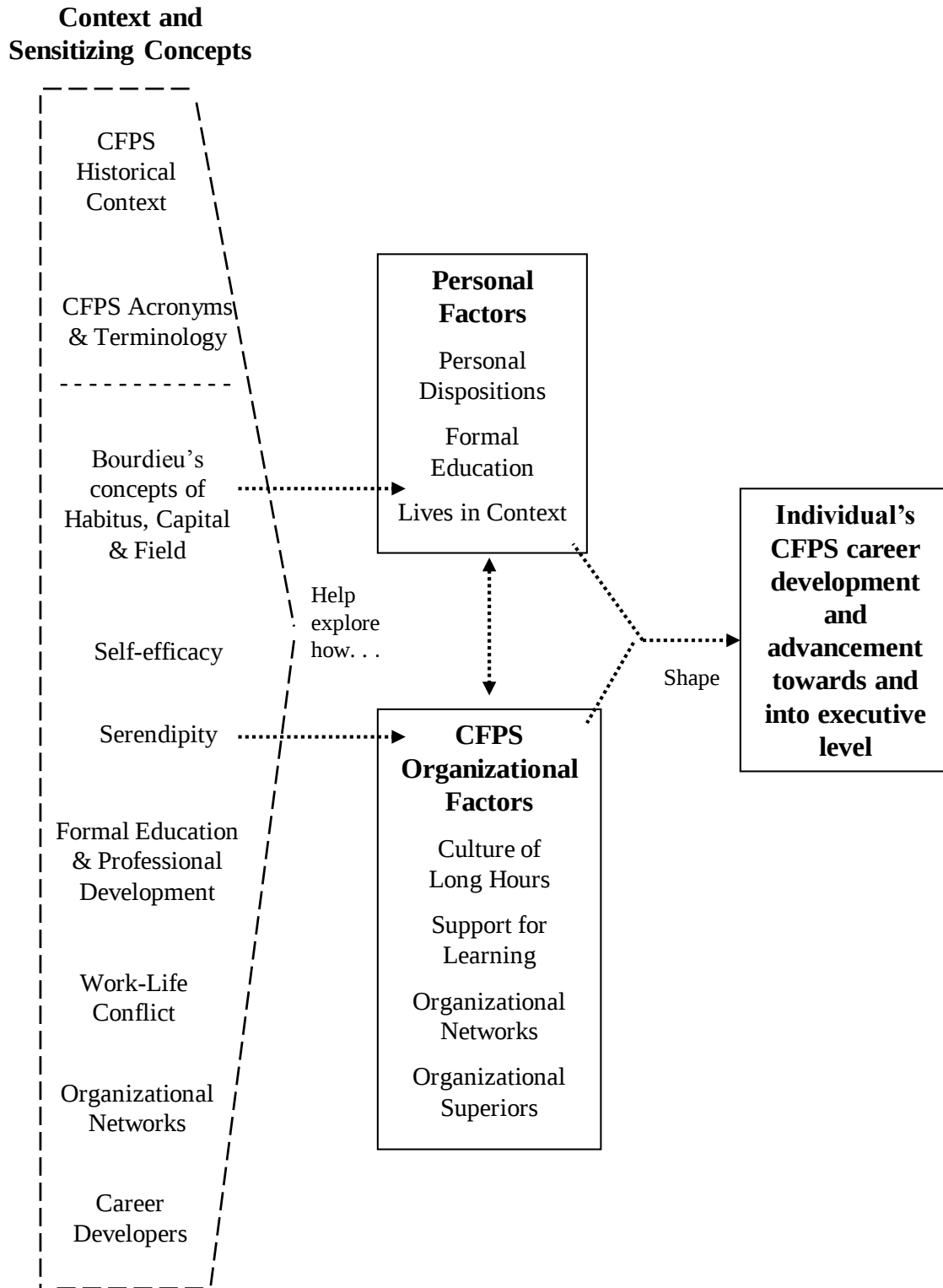
The purpose of this qualitative research study was to explore the career development and advancement of women towards and into entry executive level positions within the Canadian Federal Public Service (CFPS). The study was guided by the following three research questions:

From the perspectives of women themselves:

1. How have personal factors influenced career development and advancement of women in the CFPS towards and into the pre-executive (EX-minus-01) level and entry executive (EX-01) level?
2. How have organizational factors influenced career development and advancement of women in the CFPS towards and into the pre-executive (EX-minus-01) level and entry executive (EX-01) level?
3. How have these two factors combined to shape women's CFPS careers?

Maxwell (2005) envisions the conceptual framework of a study as a necessary part of the research design, a “system of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs, and theories which supports and informs” one’s research (p. 33). Maxwell uses the metaphor of the coat closet in which he sees “coat hooks” as representing the different concepts upon which data can “hang” in order to explain important relationships. In the present study I have used seven “hooks” as sensitizing concepts to help us understand how personal and organizational factors have shaped an individual’s CFPS career development and advancement towards and into the pre-executive and entry executive level. A diagram depicting the Conceptual Framework is shown in Figure 1. Each of the

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



sensitizing concepts identified in the diagram are discussed below, along with appropriate literature. As Maxwell cautions, it is important to focus on studies and theories “that are particularly *relevant* to your research” (p. 35, italics in original). This strategy avoids the danger of having a series of “book reports” of unconnected literature with questionable ties to one’s research. Moreover, the framework guiding this inquiry has drawn from several disciplines and bodies of literature; consistent with Maxwell’s view, I feel this approach has been fruitful in understanding the phenomenon under study. The conceptual framework has used a number of “sensitizing concepts” which Schwandt (2001) notes are useful in order to “provide a general sense of direction and reference for a study” (p. 237).

The conceptual framework is based on seven sensitizing concepts. A historical context helps position participants within the CFPS from 1800 to the present. CFPS acronyms and terminology are also included to help readers understand terms used by insiders.

Concepts of Bourdieu’s Habitus, Capital and Field, self-efficacy, serendipity, formal education, and professional development, and work-life conflict are used to focus on the personal aspects of women’s career development within the CFPS. Organizational networks and career developers concentrate on some of the sensitizing concepts that may impact upon women’s careers within an organizational context. Together these concepts help to explore how personal factors and organizational factors shaped individuals’ CFPS careers. It should be noted that the three personal factors and the four CFPS organizational factors identified in the figure were not determined a priori but rather they emerged as key themes during the analysis of the study.

Historical Overview of Women in the Canadian Federal Public Service

In order to derive meaning and significance from women's individual career experiences within the CFPS it is important to situate women's participation in the organization from a historical perspective. Furthermore, for those unfamiliar with this governmental organization, a historical description will provide background knowledge about CFPS women.

In the beginning, the first female public servant in the CFPS was a Deputy Matron at the Kingston Penitentiary in 1870 (Public Service Commission, 1973). By 1886, only 24 women were employed in permanent positions as lowest entry-level clerks in the Post Office. Even in 1918 when the Civil Service Act incorporated a policy of equal pay for equal work, competitions could be limited on the basis of gender, so women were hired to fill only low-level positions, what today would be considered a clear case of gender discrimination. Restrictions were imposed in 1921 and married women were constrained from employment unless they were self-supporting or if men were unavailable. Between 1939 and 1945, during the war, single and married women were permitted to work in non-traditional CFPS jobs; but after the war, married women again faced restrictions and were forced to resign. Archibald (1970) reported that the Civil Service "perceived its problem not as one of keeping women down, that was taken for granted, but as one of keeping down the number of women in the Civil Service" (p. 14).

By the 1950's, 80 per cent of women in the CFPS were concentrated in low-level office or administrative positions. Only when the Department of Labour studied workforce trends of women in Canada, in 1955, were regulations prohibiting employment of women in the Public Service removed (Status of Women, 2003). However, inequalities

that women faced in the workplace were not acknowledged until 1966 when thirty-two organizations, representing over two million Canadian women, lobbied the federal government to establish a Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada. Chaired by Florence Bird, this Commission's report was cited as having been the single most important event that helped advance the status of women in Canada (Royal Commission on the Status of Women, 1970). One hundred and sixty-seven recommendations were tabled in Parliament in 1970 as a result. Prime Minister Trudeau promised to make the recommendations a priority and appointed a Cabinet member to this portfolio and an Interdepartmental Committee examined the Royal Commission Report. Moreover, Deputy Ministers were encouraged to help more women advance into middle and senior management positions (Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1990). However, very little happened in the next decade. In 1983, recognition that there was only 5.9 percent of women in management resulted in the establishment of a Women's Career Counseling and Referral Bureau (Public Service Commission, 1985). Subsequently, the Abella Report (Abella, 1984) found that the majority of women were still compressed into what were termed "Pink Ghettos", the lowest paying clerical and support jobs, and claimed this as economically-limiting job segregation. The report stated that routine hiring of qualified women would be required throughout all occupational areas of the CFPS to allow for equitable representation of women in management rather than just the occasional 'token' appointment of women to these positions. In 1985 the Honourable Pat Carney, P.C., noticed that there were still few women at the executive level in the Public Service. Upon asking where the women were, she was told "We had one but she left...we have one but she's not ready yet or ...she's too young" (Minister of

Supply and Services Canada, 1990, Volume 1, Foreword). Subsequently, 117 reports were reviewed to launch a major study on women in the Public Service resulting in a major four-volume report entitled *Beneath the Veneer* (Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1990). Successive studies in the 1990's (e.g., Government of Canada, 1992; Griffith, MacBride-King and Townsend, 1997; Duxbury, Dyke & Lam, 1999; Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, 1999), noted that barriers still existed for women in Corporate and professional Canada, including the CFPS.

In 1988 less than half of CFPS new hires were women (47.1%); but by 1996 the percentage of new female hires had risen to 63.4 percent, which was the highest percentage of female hires between 1996 and 2004. In 2004 close to six out of ten new hires were women (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, 2005). In terms of the overall representation within the Core Public Administration (CPA) "the proportion of women...has been increasing continuously from 1995 to 2006...and since 1999 women have outnumbered men" (Nacz, 2007). As of March, 2005 women numbered 88,702 or 53.5 percent of the Core Public Administration (CPA).

Contrary to the CFPS's claim that it is a 'workplace of choice' (Public Service Commission of Canada, 2008b), in a 1999 interview with researcher Linda Duxbury, Kathryn May, an Ottawa Citizen writer, reported the following:

Public servants emerge as a dedicated but unhappy bunch who feel they work for a public that doesn't respect them; bosses who don't recognize or acknowledge them and a rigid rules-based bureaucracy that stops them from getting experience to progress. They feel overworked, stressed out, frustrated, torn between their families and job and, to top it all off, they're underpaid...84% of executives are thinking of leaving the

CFPS, 40% are actively looking for new jobs and 71% of foreign service officers, policy analysts and other administrative officers are also considering careers outside government. (May, 1999 p. A1)

The above quote raises some questions about what life might be like for individuals at the pre-executive and entry executive levels within the CFPS. For example, what kinds of relationships have the individuals in the present study had with their bosses? What kinds of experiences have they had that may have helped them in their CFPS careers? How do they describe their work environments in relation to their family lives throughout their CFPS careers? To what extent is salary a pivotal concern in terms of their careers in the CFPS?

Over the decades, the CFPS has grown to over 165,000 employees and women's representation has also grown. Nevertheless, although women now make up more than half of the CFPS employees, they remain underrepresented at higher levels. Table 1 summarizes the number and percentage of individuals within the Core Public Administration as of March, 2005.

As Table 1 indicates, with a few exceptions, the percentage of women generally declines with each higher level. Moreover, there is a difference of approximately 20% in the percentage of women employees – 59.2% vs. 37.9%/40.6% — between categories below EX-minus-03 and the two groups under investigation in the present study (EX-minus-01; EX-01). Finally, it is notable that for every EX-01 female incumbent, there are approximately four EX-minus-01 incumbents, which suggests that there is likely stiff competition for available jobs at the entry executive level.

**Table 1: Summary of Employees in the CFPS: Core Public Administration
(Indeterminate, Seasonal and Terms of 3 months or more – March 2005)**

Total Core Public Administration (From highest to lowest rank)	Total	Men	Women	Percentage of Females
EX-05	71	53	18	25.4%
EX-04	200	126	74	37.0%
EX-03	738	499	239	32.4%
EX-02	994	659	335	33.7%
EX EQUIVALENTS (Professional (e.g., Scientific, Statisticians etc.)	5,424	3,633	1,791	33.0%
Participants in yellow below				
EX-01 (entry executive level)	2,302	1,367	935	40.6%
EX-Minus-01 (Feeder Groups for entry executive level)	10,405	6,462	3,943	37.9%
EX-Minus-02	15,511	8,681	6,830	44.0%
EX-Minus-03	21,601	11,319	10,282	47.6%
Others (Below EX- minus-03)	108,610	44,355	64,255	59.2%
Totals :	165,856	77,154	88,702	53.5%

L. Buhlagiar, personal communication, Public Service Agency of Canada, October 9, 2007

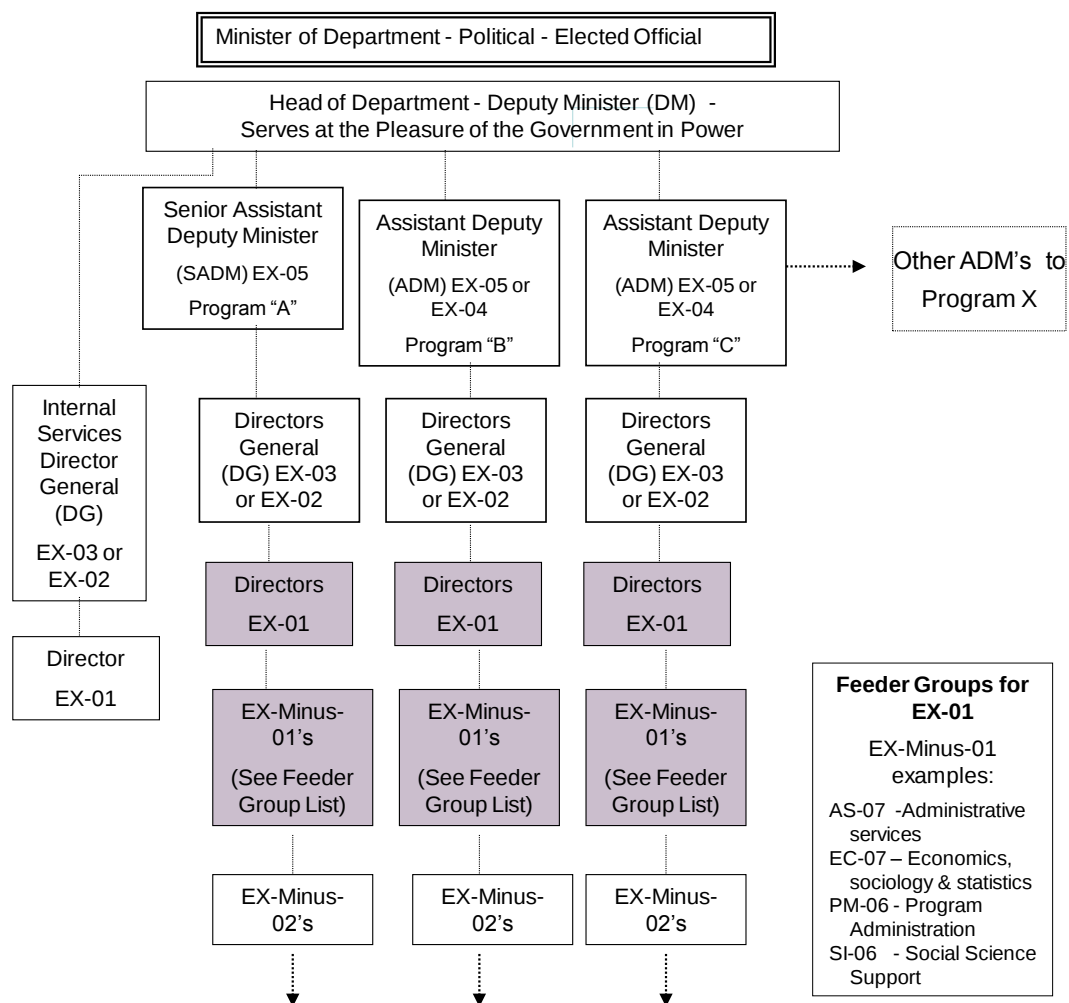
But percentages and numbers do not provide any sense of what women have been *experiencing* as they have built their CFPS careers toward and into the entry executive level. The present study aims to demystify some of the factors that have helped shape those experiences.

CFPS Hierarchy, Acronyms and Terminology

With over 165,000 employees (PSHRMAC, 2005), the CFPS is a huge bureaucratic organization. Figure 2 provides a simplified organizational chart that includes the EX-minus-02 level and above. Each federal government department within the CFPS has its own hierarchical structure that is similar to that shown in Figure 2. It should be noted that the figure only shows some of the very basic relationships between the various EX levels; the actual organizational charts of different departments are much more complex. Moreover, the figure does not indicate the relative numbers of positions at each level. In other words, a federal department might have five Assistant Deputy Ministers, a dozen or so Directors General, many more Directors, and so on as one goes through the hierarchy. The overall number of individuals at different levels can be found in Table 1. Participants in the present study are those at EX-01 and EX-minus-01 levels as indicated by the shaded boxes in Figure 2.

The CFPS uses a large number of concepts and acronyms and terms that are known and used by insiders. The following list is provided in order to help the reader understand specific terminology used in this study. For consultative purposes, this list is replicated in Appendix A.

Figure 2: Canadian Federal Public Service (CFPS) Simplified Hierarchical Structure
(Shaded levels are focus of Study)



Employee Positions (Simplified Structure):

Deputy Minister (DM)– Department Head - Appointed by the Government
 Senior Assistant Deputy Minister or Assistant Deputy Minister (SADM/ADM) – Responsible for departmental programs
 Directors General (DG) Responsible for Individual Program files related to more than one area of responsibility
 Directors – Responsible for assigned portfolios
 EX-minus-01's or EX-minus-02's – Direct or manage specific program files

Acronyms

ADM	Assistant Deputy Minister – responsible for departmental programs
AEXDP	Accelerated EX Development Program – program to advance executives who have shown that they have the potential to become Assistant Deputy Ministers. (Canada School of Public Service, 2008)
CAP	Career Assignment Program – a program that aimed to accelerate leadership development and advancement by recruiting public servants with demonstrated executive potential. The Career Assignment program, delivered by the Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer is being phased out as a central initiative. Departments and agencies now have the responsibility for employee development at this level. During a 3-year placement, CAP participants would take part in a combination of hands-on work experience and training sessions to prepare them for senior level positions. (Treasury Board Secretariat of Canada, 2010a)
CFPS	Canadian Federal Public Service
DG	Director General – Responsible for individual program files related to more than one area of responsibility
DM	Deputy Minister – Department Head
EX level	Executive Level – refers to all levels of executives
EX-minus-01	One level just below executive level
EX-minus-02	Two levels below executive level
EX-01	First entry executive level (normally called a Director)
MBA	Master of Business Administration (a graduate degree)
MTP	Management Trainee Program – previously delivered by Office of Chief Human Resources Officer, now being phased out – departments are responsible for providing various assignments to those inside and outside government to become managers in the CFPS. (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, 2010b).
FSWEP	Federal Student Work Experience Program (a student bridging mechanism to hire students into the public service after graduation) (Public Service Commission of Canada, November 24, 2009).

Terminology

Acting (as in Acting Director)	An acting designation can be at any level and it means that a person in a lower level position is given an acting assignment in a higher level job – they are paid at the higher level during the time they are doing the job. For example an EX-minus-01 who gets an Acting Director position (EX-01) is normally paid at the Director level for the period of time that they are acting as a Director.
Assignment	A person who obtains a job at their substantive group and level within one's own department. Secondment – an assignment in a different department.
B.Comm.	Bachelor of Commerce (undergraduate university degree)
Briefing Notes	A briefing note is a key communication and decision-making tool in government whose purpose may be to assist in making a decision and defining an issue or to consider a course of action. It provides relevant information in a clear, concise manner which is useful for the person who needs to be informed such as for a Minister or a Deputy Minister.
Canada School of Public Service	The Canada School of Public Service was created to address common learning needs of public service employees. The CFPS tailors its products and services specifically to meet the needs of public service employees at all levels of government.
Federal Government Department	Federal departments vary in size from small (fewer than 400 employees), to medium (400 to 3,000 employees) to large (more than 3,000 to almost 25,000 employees) (Public Service Commission, 2004). Examples: Indian and Northern Affairs, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, Health and Welfare Canada, Public Works and Government Services Canada.
Deployment	Movement of indeterminate (permanent) employee from one federal government department to another in the same group and level as in their previous department (transfer within the CFPS at the same group and level – not a promotion).
General Counsel	Each government department and agency has general counsel (lawyers) on staff for legal opinions concerning departmental issues.

Group and Level	All jobs in the CFPS are categorized as per their groups and there are several levels (i.e. salary increments within each group). For example, a person in the AS group (Administrative Services) can be an AS-01 up to an AS-08. The group is Administrative Services; the salary level they are at would be indicated by 01 up to 08 which are the levels.
Leave with Income Averaging (LIA)	Leave with Income Averaging (LIA) is a flexible working arrangement which allows indeterminate (permanent) employees, whose employer is Treasury Board Secretariat, to take blocks of leave without pay (LWOP) of between 5 weeks and 3 months, within a 12-month period that the LIA covers. The reduced rate of pay is then averaged and calculated over the 12 month period (Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2010).
Linguistic Profile	The linguistic profile summarizes English and French language qualifications for each of the three linguistic skills: reading, writing, and oral interaction. (Canadian Museum of Civilization, 2009).
Minister	The Minister is a Member of Parliament elected by the Canadian Public through national elections. This is a political position and they are at the top of the CFPS Hierarchy for each Federal Government Department.
Personnel Psychology Centre (PPC)	The Personnel Psychology Centre (PPC) of the Public Service Commission of Canada assesses employees and provides psychologists for assessment and executive coaching (Public Service Commission of Canada, October 30, 2009).
Privy Council Office	The Privy Council Office (PCO) provides impartial advice and support to the Prime Minister and Cabinet (Privy Council Office, 2010).
Secondment	An assignment of a CFPS employee to another federal department.
Student Bridging	A mechanism which is a staffing option provided to managers to facilitate the integration of students into positions in the federal public service after the completion of their educational program. One example is the Federal Student Work Experience Program (FSWEP) (Public Service Commission of Canada, November 24, 2010).
Treasury Board:	The Department is responsible for accountability and ethics, financial, personnel and administrative management,

comptrollership and approving regulations – It is the core public administration’s employer.

Bourdieu’s Social Theory

Bourdieu, a French social theorist, is particularly well-known for his concepts of habitus, capital and field. Each of these terms and their interactions are helpful in understanding various aspects of career development and advancement.

According to Bourdieu (1991), “habitus is a set of dispositions which incline agents [individuals] to act and react in certain ways...they are regular, inculcated, structured, durable, generative and transposable” (p. 12) as described below: *Regular* refers to behaviours governed by rules which become almost second nature to a person depending upon the environment and context in which one has learned them – they tend to be acquired through a gradual process. *Inculcated* means that a person has learned through a series of experiences and training, often but not solely through parents. This may include such actions as using the right dining utensils or shaking a person’s hand – habits learned through repeated practice and corrections that become almost second nature. These inculcations form a part of how the individual “moulds” (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 12) their body in ways in which they may not even be consciously aware of their existence.

Structure refers to the fact that one’s set of dispositions is acquired through inculcation within the social context in which they were learned. For example, a person from a privileged background will have acquired their dispositions, such as their ways of speaking, differently from those who may not have had books, access to similar education, parental guidance, or who lived in very different environments which helped them acquire a different set of dispositions. Moreover, these dispositions are *durable*. They become so “ingrained” (p. 12) that individuals are often not even conscious of their

existence since they become second nature and stay with them throughout their lives. Finally, these dispositions are *generative* and *transposable*. They are able to generate or perpetuate other practices in contexts other than those in which they were originally acquired.

Webb, Schirato, and Danaher (2002) explain the concept of habitus as follows – “habitus can be understood as the values and dispositions gained from our cultural history that stay with us and that permit us to respond to cultural contexts and rules in a variety of ways (because they allow for improvisation) but the responses are always largely regulated and determined by where and who we have been in a particular culture” (p. 36, 37). An example may be that students may choose institutions for their education where they might tend to better fit in since these educational institutions may appreciate and reward dispositions they acquired through their family and earlier schooling experiences (Bourdieu, 1996, 140-141). Habitus, described by Bourdieu in simpler terms, is how individuals become themselves by being exposed to experiences of those around them, for example, parents, friends, teachers, professors, colleagues, classmates, superiors and others who think, act, speak and behave in certain ways.

Iellatchitch, Mayrofer, and Meyer (2003) have linked the concept of habitus to careers. According to the authors, “the idea of progression and a desire for growth is central in *career habitus*, whereby growth may take different forms contingent on the...rules [within a particular work context]: climbing the hierarchical ladder, increasing reputation or level of expertise, etc.” (p. 739). Those individuals who are dominant within a specific work context are the ones that are the “carriers of *career habitus*” (p.739) within that context. Moreover, individuals who have spent years developing a specific

habitus that is valued within a given field are much better positioned to succeed in that field than those who have not. For example, someone who has worked for years specializing in a scientific area would likely find that their career habitus was less influential if they were to move into a work context where they needed to manage large projects.

In the present study habitus can be a helpful concept to understand circumstances in which participants may have sometimes felt out of place due to having ended up in environments or social contexts where their backgrounds were dissimilar from their new colleagues. To borrow from Bourdieu's analogy, they feel like a fish out of water.

According to Bourdieu, three main forms of capital make up an individual's habitus: economic, cultural and social, with one form of capital sometimes being able to be convertible to another. Iellatchitch, et al. (2003) apply the concept of capital to careers: "Career capitals are those capitals used by the agent [individual] for work-related activities that are valued by [others within the same career environment]" (p. 735). Career capital can be economic, cultural or social.

Economic capital in the normal context is "material wealth in the form of money, stocks and shares, property" (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 14). Bourdieu considers capital as assets that various dominant and subordinate groups possess that can be "exchanged for desired outcomes" (Webb, Schirato & Danaher, 2002, p. 110). An example may be paying money (economic capital) for tuition in exchange for eventually obtaining a degree (cultural capital). In the present study, the concept of economic capital is helpful to the extent that it may have helped individuals in one way or another progress in their CFPS careers.

Cultural capital is “a form of value associated with culturally authorized tastes, consumption patterns, attributes, skills and awards” (Webb et al., p. x). Two forms of cultural capital have informed the present study: embodied capital and institutional capital. First, embodied cultural capital is defined by Bourdieu (1991) as that which is “linked to the body and presupposes embodiment...incorporation, which insofar as it implies a labor of inculcation and assimilation, costs time, time which must be invested personally by the investor” (p. 244). Unlike economic capital, embodied cultural capital is not acquired instantly but rather through a considerable amount of investment and effort by the person to become who they are – to cultivate certain aspects of themselves. For example, a person’s exposure to the academic field, over time, may pre-dispose them to begin thinking, speaking, analyzing, and using body language similar to those of their academic colleagues, regardless of a previous background that may have been quite different. Second, institutional cultural capital is gained in some form of accreditation, for example a university degree or trade certificate, which can be exchanged for a particular job due to the value of the degree or certificate attesting that a person has achieved the required knowledge or skills necessary to do the job. Moreover, education can be seen as providing the individual with a considerable amount of cultural capital, especially for those who may have been previously marginalized. Bourdieu’s concept of cultural capital encompasses human capital theory. For example, Sweetland (1996) makes the point that education is a pivotal component of human capital theory; and it can take the form of informal and formal education, on-the-job training, and vocational education. In the present study it was felt that Bourdieu’s concept of cultural capital was more appropriate

because it is one part of a constellation of concepts (habitus, economic capital, social capital, field) that work together to help explain career development and advancement.

Social capital, according to Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) is “the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition” (p. 119). A simpler definition is offered by Lin (2000): Social capital is *“an investment and use of embedded resources in social relations for expected returns”* (p. 786, italics in original). It is the number and quality of resources that a person, group or community can access or use within their location or their resource’s location in a social network. Social capital has the potential to enhance an individual’s circumstances in the sense that it expands one’s power and reach through affiliation. In this study the concept of social capital has been helpful to understand how individuals have used their CFPS networks to help further their careers.

The concept of “field” according to Bourdieu is the context within which habitus is recognized and appreciated, and various forms of capital are deployed and considered valuable. Bourdieu often uses the analogy of a game, “un jeu” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), to explain how fields work. A field is not a tangible place or thing, but an environment in which there are rules that are neither “explicit [nor] codified” (p. 98). Stakes are produced by competition between players in the “field” which is a place of fierce competition where their vested interests are deployed or played as trump cards or chits (for example, it may be vying for a job and the person with the most ‘capital’ wins). The rules of the so-called ‘game’ may change according to the hierarchical structure of various forms of capital. Those in the field with the most influence and ability to

determine the outcome and to confer power decide what forms of capital are accepted or rejected by the field. For example, a given accreditation (institutional capital) is valuable only to the extent that it is recognized as valuable by the field.

The field, however, is not static but instead changes over time, depending on who has influence at a particular time. According to Lindh and Dahlin, (2000) within a given field there is a hierarchy and “ongoing struggle for the right to exert influence on the field” (p. 202). Depending on one’s habitus and the context in which various capitals are deployed within a given field, people strive to achieve distinction (Bourdieu, 1984). At the same time, players have unequal influence on the rules of the game and unequal resources with which to play. Bourdieu asks the rhetorical question, “Who has the right to speak?” (Bourdieu, 1977 as cited in Lindh & Dahlin, 2000, p. 8); it would be those who have the most influence and resources in the field at a particular time.

Iellatchitch, et al. (2003) apply the concept of ‘field’ to careers. According to the authors, career fields are an “unfolding network of work-related positions” in a given social context where “a patterned set of practices...are enabled and constrained by the rules of the field and, in turn, contribute to the shaping of these rules” (p. 732). Individuals within the workforce attempt to use their “field-relevant capitals” to vie for an improved status within the field.

Together, Bourdieu’s three concepts of habitus, capital, and field are helpful in understanding how one’s values and dispositions acquired through life which provide them with financial, cultural, and social leverage can be used to ‘play the CFPS career game’, so to speak.

Self-Efficacy

Whereas Bourdieu's concepts above have been helpful in providing a sociological lens to the study of career development and advancement in the CFPS, Bandura's psychological concept of "self-efficacy" helps one consider how an individual's expectations about their future success may be shaped and reinforced through different types of life experiences more generally and CFPS experiences more specifically. According to Bandura (1995), "Perceived self-efficacy refers to beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations. Efficacy beliefs influence how people think, feel, motivate themselves, and act" (p. 2).

Social cognitive theory has been used by vocational researchers (Lent, Brown & Hackett, 1994; Judge, Bono, Erez, & Locke, 2005) to explain what kind of supports or barriers enable or prevent people from meeting their expected goals within a career development context. Several research studies of young people have found Bandura's self-efficacy concepts useful to study career development of differing populations. For example, Corrigan (2008) studied college students with disabilities using social cognitive career theory. Griffiths (2006) compared female college students from differing socioeconomic status groups using the constructs of self-efficacy, career self-efficacy, and psychosocial identity development. Liu (2009) examined career self-efficacy of international graduate students. Patel (2005) studied career self-efficacy of Vietnamese adolescents. Strachan (2008) used social cognitive theory to study career self-efficacy of emerging adults from 18 to 25 years of age. Finally, Whitson's (2008) study focused on

stereotypical threats on undergraduate women and men's self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and interests about math and science careers.

Bandura's social cognitive theory relies on three social cognitive processes: outcome expectations, goals, and self-efficacy expectations. According to Bandura (1997) outcome expectations are an individual's beliefs about the consequence of their behaviour, which can take three forms: physical (will the outcome be pleasurable or painful?), social (what will people think of me?) or self-evaluative (will the outcome give me a sense of pride or self-worth?). Goals are "the cognitive motivational bridge that translate abstract musings into concrete actions....[they are] the activators of purposeful behaviour" (Hartman, 2006, p. 44). Bandura's third concept, self-efficacy, is the pivotal construct within social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977, 1997; Hartman). It is considered to be the most important factor in predicting how a person will attempt various tasks, succeed in setting their goals, and acquire the desired outcome (Bandura, 1986).

There are four principal sources of self-efficacy beliefs. An individual's self-efficacy derives from four types of past experiences: 1) enactive mastery experience 2) vicarious experience, 3) affective states, and 4) verbal persuasion by others (Bandura, 1997). These are discussed below.

Enactive Mastery Experience

The first source of self-efficacy, enactive mastery experience, is the most influential source of efficacy information because it provides "the most authentic evidence of whether one can muster whatever it takes to succeed. Successes build a robust belief in one's personal efficacy" (Bandura, 1997, p. 80). For example, obtaining a university degree would provide experiences enabling individuals to learn how to master

certain concepts which later may provide the underpinnings for them to acquire, and be comfortable in doing a desired job. Bandura (1997) considers that success in an individual's performance may demonstrate to them that they are capable of taking on more complex tasks which, by doing so, then leads to their believing that they can achieve still higher accomplishments in other settings. Moreover, by facing various difficulties an individual with high self-efficacy is able to "turn failure into success by honing one's capabilities to exercise better control over events" (p. 80). Once people have acquired enough self-efficacy through experiences that demonstrate they are able to succeed, they then are often more able to persevere through trying times, coming out of those experiences being even stronger and better able to deal with any other difficulties they face. This concept of mastery experiences is helpful in understanding how self-efficacy can help shape an individual's career. It sheds light on how individuals have been able to face and cope with difficult situations.

Vicarious Experience

Vicarious experience is acquired by individuals through their observations of others. According to Bandura (1997), "people compare themselves to particular associates in similar situations such as classmates, work associates, competitors....Surpassing associates or competitors raises efficacy beliefs, whereas being outperformed lowers them" (p. 87). For example, consider two people studying science at university. One has really enjoyed science all throughout their high school courses, feels they are good at it, and excels in the course, whereas the other person does not like science but needs it as a pre-requisite to move on to something else and performs poorly (i.e., has a lower mark than the class average). The person who excels in this particular

subject compared to her peers would presumably have a higher level of self-efficacy in science than the person who has done poorly. Observing individuals who are similar to oneself can also be a source of self-efficacy, even if they lack knowledge of their abilities in a particular domain. Effective models who demonstrate good coping strategies can raise efficacy beliefs in those who previously might have felt ineffectual, as well as in those who are already self-assured (Bandura). For example, bosses who exude confidence and encourage others by their positive attitude and expectations of success in tackling significant problems would be a better model to build self-efficacy in employees by that behaviour than those who doubt that they can accomplish the task and are negative about outcomes being achievable.

Affective States

A third source of self-efficacy, affective states, stems from individuals' physiological and emotional states that guide their judgments as to what they are able to accomplish. These states arise from a vast array of experiences people have had during various processes while making judgments about their capabilities. Physical manifestations of stress due to a person's lack of self-efficacy in a certain situation can lead to further debilitating performance. Bandura (1997) considers that "perceived vulnerability to psychological stressors heightens the level and salience of physiological reactions. It is difficult to ignore internal visceral agitation when one is hyperventilating; sweating; tensing; trembling; and experiencing a pounding heart, stomach upsets, and bouts of insomnia. The self-directed attention further highlights the internal agitation" (p. 107). One can imagine how an individual who is expected to do a job without having the necessary knowledge, skills and/or abilities may feel vulnerable which in turn may cause

them to develop physiological signs of stress. Conversely, physiological signs such as increased heart rate or excitement may be viewed by a high achiever as an “energizing facilitator” (p. 108). In other words, “the problem is not arousal per se but the view one takes of it” (p. 108). For example, a person may be working incredibly long hours, be rushing from here to there, have little time to even eat, and their adrenalin may be rushing because they are excited about a particular project; they may see their physiological state as being a good sign that they are accomplishing great things.

Verbal Persuasion

The fourth source of self-efficacy is verbal persuasion. Social persuasion by others that contributes towards people believing they have what it takes to accomplish their goals may help to increase a person’s self-efficacy. Bandura (1997) argues that those who are verbally encouraged are more likely to put in efforts and to try harder to accomplish what others believe they are capable of doing. An example of verbal persuasion is a superior who is confident that an employee can take on a new project, encourages her to take on the project, and provides supportive feedback, would presumably increase the employee’s self-efficacy which perhaps would lead the employee to take on further challenges. Disparaging criticism, on the other hand, serves to lower a person’s self-efficacy.

Bandura considers that positive feedback can only help an individual raise their sense of self-efficacy, if by trying harder the person is, in fact, able to accomplish the goal or task. If a person believes unrealistic expectations of what can be achieved, which then invites that person to attempt something and fail, then this only “invites failures that

will discredit the persuaders and further undermine the recipients' beliefs in their capabilities" (Bandura, 1997, p. 101).

Serendipity

The notion of serendipity appears to have a place in understanding how careers evolve. Several researchers have made this point (Bandura, 1998; Betsworth & Hansen, 1996; Hodkinson, & Sparkes, 1997; Krumboltz, 1998; Mitchell, Levin, & Krumboltz, 1999; Williams, Soeprapto, Like, Touradji, Hess, & Hill, 1998). Everyday life is filled with fortuitous events (Bandura, 2005). Imagine how two people might strike up a conversation at an interdepartmental meeting. One needs to find an employee and the other just happens to have the skills needed for the job. This sets in motion the possibility of a new career opportunity. As Bandura notes, "a seemingly insignificant fortuitous event can set in motion constellations of influences that alter the course of lives" (p. 19). However, such an event in and of itself has no value unless one takes advantage of the opportunity. Proactive activities such as cultivating various interests, exploring new activities, being venturesome and inquisitive predispose an individual to react to unexpected events. Bandura captures this point by using Pasteur's famous line, "Chance favors the prepared mind" (Bandura, 2005, p. 20).

In their study, Betsworth and Hansen defined serendipitous events as "*events that were not planned or predictable but that had a significant influence on [one's] career*" (p. 94, italics in original). Mitchell, Levin, and Krumboltz (1999) have developed the concept of "planned happenstance" to describe how chance events can be used to further one's career. This oxymoron is intended to highlight how individuals can create and transform unplanned events and turn them into opportunities. Planned happenstance is

made up of two concepts: “(a) exploration generates chance opportunities for increasing quality of life, and, (b) skills enable people to seize opportunities” (p. 118). Mitchell and colleagues argue that by developing the skills of curiosity, persistence, flexibility, optimism, and risk-taking, one is then able to explore unanticipated opportunities and seize them.

Few empirical studies have been conducted regarding the role of serendipity in career development (Betsworth & Hansen, 1996; Mitchell et al., 1999). One exception was a study of 237 older adults by Betsworth and Hansen in which participants were asked whether they had experienced chance events that significantly influenced their careers. Those who had experienced such an event were asked to provide a written description of it. Researchers found that 63% of the men and 57% of the women had experienced at least one such event. The most common categories of events found were those involving professional or personal connections, unexpected advancement, right place/right time, influences of marriage and family, encouragement of others, and influences of previous work/volunteer experiences.

There has been even less research focusing on the role chance plays in women’s careers (Williams et al., 1998). One exception is a qualitative study of 13 prominent female counseling psychologists by Williams and colleagues which focused on internal and external contextual factors. They identified six internal factors: ability to take risks and be flexible; being competent, hard working, and motivated; being persistent; having self-confidence and optimism; being alert to opportunities; feeling comfortable, stable and secure and the ability to use self-knowledge and reflection to their advantage. They also identified three external factors: having a support system; experiencing cultural and

personal events (e.g. divorce which permitted freedom); and being free from external barriers (e.g., being single).

Another exception was a qualitative study by Lalonde (1993) of 29 senior CFPS women ranging from Director General (DG) to Deputy Minister (DM) level that aimed to understand what success factors helped them advance in their careers in the CFPS.

Twenty-eight percent of the participants believed that “luck or being at the right place at the right time was a contributing factor to their success” (p. 24).

In trying to understand the career development and advancement of women into the EX-minus-01 and EX-01 levels within the CFPS, it seemed useful to keep in mind possible instances where serendipity may have played a small role in shaping individuals’ careers.

Formal Education and Professional Development

Research has repeatedly linked levels of education to career success (Cox & Harquail, 1991; Judge, Cable, Boudreau & Bretz, 1995; Melamed, 1996). For example, studies have shown that more education has been linked to diverse positive outcomes: education provides more job options (Wayne, Liden, Kraimer, & Graf, 1999) and better financial compensation (Judge, et al. 1995; Melamed, 1996; Statistics Canada, 2000; Whitely, Doherty & Dreher, 1991); helps individuals attain higher economic status (Statistics Canada, 2006c); reduces women’s poverty (Pandey, Zhan & Kim, 2006); and enables women to enter into knowledge-worker jobs and enhances their beliefs that they are more marketable due to increased skills (Kirchmeyer, 1998; Schneer and Reitman, 1995). Moreover, Pandey and colleagues (2006) argue that “educated individuals understand the importance of deadlines, punctuality, dependability, and respect for

authority and for others around them” (p. 490), which increases their opportunities to be offered and rewarded with jobs with higher salaries.

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which is considered to be “a think tank of the organised world” (Anonymous, 2009, p. 1), despite the increasing numbers of individuals with post-secondary education, it continues to hold value. Andreas Schleicher, the OECD’s chief of education research, wonders each year whether it will be the year in which higher education begins to lose its value, but there seems to be no sign of this happening; employers still seek out and reward those with higher education (Anonymous, 2009; OECD, 2009). In relation to other OECD countries, Canadians in general, and Canadian women in particular, tend to be highly educated (Berger & Parkin, 2009). Canadians currently hold more than twice the OECD average of postsecondary educational certificates (Boothby & Drewes, 2006). According to Statistics Canada (2006), “more than half of all women in Canada have had some form of postsecondary education” (p.89). The 2006 report found that although middle-aged Canadian women are less likely than their younger counterparts to have post-secondary education, 44 percent of Canadian women between the ages of 45 and 64 have some level of post-secondary education (Lindsay & Almey, 2005). This statistic is important in light of the fact that this is the approximate age range of the women in the present study.

Those who tend to be promoted and who do so more quickly, are those with university degrees (Elmuti, Lehman, & Harmon, 2003). Moreover, Canadian women with post-secondary education, in comparison to their less educated female counterparts, are more likely to be salaried employees. A Statistics Canada (2006b) report noted that 75

percent of women with a university degree and 69 percent of those with a certificate or diploma from a community college were salaried workers, in comparison to 59 percent of high school graduates, 38 percent of women who had not completed high school, and 15 percent who had only grade 8 education (p. 7).

According to several researchers who have focused on or have included CFPS knowledge workers in their studies (Duxbury et al., 1999; Dwyer, 1999, 2003), formal education is an important factor for career development and advancement. This finding is not so surprising given that in recent years, despite an overall decline in the number of CFPS workers, knowledge-based workers have increased significantly in numbers and percentages whereas less knowledge-based workers have decreased. In 1995 the overall size of the Core Public Administration¹ (CPA) was approximately 188,000; in 2006 its overall size decreased to approximately 178,000. Between these same years knowledge-based workers increased from approximately 77,300 to 102,700. Percentage-wise, 41 percent of the 1995 workforce were knowledge-based workers whereas 58 percent of the 2006 workforce were knowledge-based workers, which represents an increase of 17 percent. In contrast, less knowledge-based workers decreased from 106,000 in 1995 to 70,600 in 2006 (Naczek, 2007).

In an interview study of 254 CFPS knowledge workers, Duxbury et al., (1999) found that 80 percent of their sample had a university education, with approximately 33 percent having an undergraduate degree, 47 percent having at least one graduate degree, and 33 percent having multiple graduate degrees. Dwyer (1999; 2003), who conducted a

¹ The Core Public Administration (CPA) “refers to the federal government employees excluding the RCMP, the Canadian Forces and separate agencies such as Canada Revenue Agency” (Naczek, 2007, p. 6).

mixed design study of Career Development and Advancement of Aboriginal executives in the CFPS, found that formal education was an important factor in helping them advance in their careers. According to his findings, participants noted two particular advantages to higher education. First, they believed they would be stopped from advancing if they didn't obtain a university degree, and second, higher education seemed to provide a greater sense of self-confidence to try for higher positions.

In recent years researchers have examined the value of the Master of Business Administration (MBA) for career development and advancement. Some studies have compared the relative value of the degree for women and men; and for the most part women appear to have benefitted less. In the 1980's, Hardesty and Jacobs (1986) found when studying women and men with MBAs that some women who had initially felt successful in their organizations later felt betrayed, since men tended to reap more rewards. A longitudinal study of data collected between 1975 and 1980 of 676 women and men who had completed their MBAs a decade or more earlier, found there were few gender differences in the perception of the value of the MBA for their jobs (Schneer & Reitman, 1994). However, the more their careers advanced in comparison to the men, the women perceived the organization to be less supportive as measured by income and satisfaction. In a very recent large on-line survey of MBA alumni who had graduated from 26 leading business schools in Asia, Canada, Europe and the United States between 1996 and 2000, researchers found that there were "surprising gender differences" (Carter & Silva, 2010, p. 3) within the sample of 4,143 women and men who had graduated from full-time MBA programs and were working in companies at the time of the survey. Men were more likely to have entered their first jobs after their MBA at higher levels and with

more pay, despite not having more people to manage; in fact, women “were being paid on average \$4,600 less in their first job than men” (p. 3). The study also found that women’s salaries did not keep pace with their male counterparts; men tended to surpass women even when they had both begun at similar levels. Moreover, in a comparison of men and women without children, the researchers found that both genders had similar aspirations. In sum, they argue that “despite similar education, ambitions and willingness to move to jobs to get the career they want, women are still being paid less and not advancing as well or as quickly as their male counterparts” (Carter & Silva, p. 5).

Not all studies found negative results for women with MBAs, however. In a Canadian survey study of male and female MBA graduates, Simpson, Sturges, Woods, and Altman (2005) and Altman, Simpson, Baruch and Burke (2005) found that an MBA enhanced the ability of both genders to more confidently deal with bosses. Although men became more comfortable with their leadership skills and it helped them develop trust in team members, women, in contrast, derived their confidence more from “a feeling of achievement; a feeling of greater self-worth...[a stronger] voice and a sense of empowerment” (Simpson et al., p. 239).

Gender issues aside, Baruch argues that middle managers in particular feel that their MBA degree “enhances self-confidence, self-esteem and self-efficacy” (Baruch, 2009, p. 397). In a similar vein, Baruch and Peiperl (2000) found that MBA graduates felt that their degree “increased their levels of self-efficacy” (p. 86); moreover the MBA seemed to be “a tangible asset....[which helped to] professionalize managers” (p. 85). However, these same authors wonder if the degree may be losing its value in that it might

be “fast becoming the ‘managerial certificate’”(p. 84) as more and more managers and administrators obtain the degree.

In the present study it has been important to consider the role that formal education has played in the careers of participants. As will be shown, education and lack of education have influenced participants’ career development and advancement in sometimes unexpected ways.

Professional development, unlike formal educational programs, consists of various types of learning experiences that do not lead to recognized accreditation outside of the organization, although it certainly can contribute to an individual’s career development and advancement. A qualitative study of eleven college-educated executive women who had worked a minimum of five years within a Fortune 500-type organization by Bierema (1996) found that informal learning was particularly helpful in learning about their organization’s culture. The participants also learned a great deal about decision-making and politics through observing and watching men and women (i.e., role-modelling), both those who were successful and those who were unsuccessful. Moreover, they believed that they learned collaboratively from “bosses, subordinates, peers, mentors, networks and external contacts” (p. 158).

McCauley, Ruderman, Ohlott, and Morrow (1994) also found that, for job transitional purposes and for development on-the-job, experiential learning was better than formal learning. Research by McQuarrie (1994), Ohlott, Ruderman, and McCauley (1994), and Tharanou, Latimer and Conroy (1994) considers that women tend to need and receive more encouragement than men and they may, therefore, be more heavily reliant on relationships to learn about their organizations.

Professional development within organizations can also be more formal such as specific training initiatives, workshops, courses, and the like. Specific to the CFPS, Dwyer (2003) found that having opportunities to obtain training and additional educational qualifications tended to “accelerate the likelihood of advancement” (p. 885). Within the CFPS individuals can also learn new skills on-the-job through assignments, secondments, and acting assignments/positions. Assignments are temporary moves to another job within one’s substantive (permanent) department. Secondments are similar, but refer to assignments in another department from the individual’s substantive department (Public Service Commission of Canada, 2008a). Acting assignments are “stretch” assignments in the sense that they permit the individual to temporarily work at a higher level than one’s substantive (permanent) position.

The CFPS also requires its employees to create individual learning plans which, in conjunction with the manager, help determine what developmental activities employees will undertake each fiscal year. As a case in point, an individual learning plan might include courses for either personal or professional development to help them develop in their career (e.g., university courses) and/or to carry out their job responsibilities (e.g., to learn a new technology). Another common example of what a learning plan might include would be French or English second language training that might be required or desired for an individual’s current or future job within the CFPS. Budgetary constraints in part help determine what kinds of learning activities can be undertaken.

The CFPS also has developed more formal initiatives to help individuals at different levels of the hierarchy to develop their careers. For example, the Federal Student Workplace Experience Program (FSWEP) provides temporary summer

employment for students at various educational levels. In some cases a summer job in the CFPS might lead to a temporary or permanent position through the CFPS's "bridging mechanism" (Public Service Commission of Canada, 2009)

The Management Trainee Program (MTP) provides "hands-on work experience through assignments....training courses [that] focus on the basic knowledge and skills required by public service managers...including governance, policy-making, service to the public, and values and ethics. Graduates of the program [are] qualified for managerial positions at the intermediate level" (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, 2010b). Individuals require a Masters degree to qualify and compete for this program.

The Career Assignment Program (CAP), which no longer exists but was in effect during the timeframe of the careers of individuals within the present study, was a long-standing program within the CFPS that was aimed at

middle managers...who have demonstrated the necessary potential to become members of the Executive Group. The objective of CAP [was] to provide a representative group of employees with the opportunity to broaden their experience, prove their managerial ability and develop a strong corporate vision with a view to enriching the pool from which executives [were] selected . (Duxbury, et al., 1999, p. 38 of 253)

CAP contained an educational component which included travel throughout Canada to expose candidates to broader areas of government; this was followed by several long-term assignments over a period of several years during which time the candidate would gain competencies needed at the executive level. Entry into CAP was a very rigorous

process involving simulations, testing, and so on; only approximately 20 participants were typically accepted at any given time.

The Accelerated Executive Development Program (AEXDP) focuses on participants who are selected through a rigorous process as well. The objective of this process “is to gather information from which a clear judgment can be made concerning the candidate’s potential to reach the higher levels of the federal hierarchy including the level of Assistant Deputy Minister” (Canada School of Public Service, 2008). The overall goal of the program is to foster leadership skills through the development of a “personalized learning plan”; participation in “collective learning events” as well as an “action learning group that provides opportunities for reflection”, and special work assignments over a period of several years in order to practice new skills.

The present study has paid attention to the various training and professional development experiences that participants have acquired within the CFPS that have contributed in some way to their career development and advancement.

Work-Life Conflict

There is considerable debate about terminology surrounding the way to characterize the tensions that often arise between one’s paid work and other non-work responsibilities and pursuits. It has been common to use the term “work-family” to capture the work/non-work relationship, but critics argue that this term “continues to conjure up images of an ideal type family that consists of a married couple family with a stay-at-home mother and a breadwinner father who have dependent children” (Pitt-Catsouphes, Kossek & Sweet, 2006, p. 8). The term also seems to ignore other non-work pursuits such as volunteer work, education, elderly care, and so on (Duxbury & Higgins, 2001). The term ‘work-

family' also implies a focus on child-related issues, and it does not acknowledge other types of stable relationships.

In recent years, researchers have often used the term “work-life” in order to better capture the relationship between work and non-work. It should be noted, however, that this term is not without its critics. For example, Pitt-Catsouphes et al. (2006) argue that the term is very broad and for “research purposes, it loses analytic sharpness” (p. 8). Moreover the authors suggest that using the term work-life is also problematic since it may suggest that work and life are two separate entities when in fact one’s paid work-life is, of course, part of one’s overall life. In the present study I have used “work-life” as the larger concept to capture the relationship between work and non-work, whereas I have used “work-family” when discussing issues specifically related to children and partners.

Time Factors Related to Work

In the relationship between work and life, time devoted to work is an important issue because it leaves less time to pursue other life responsibilities and pursuits. More than three decades ago, Kanter (1977) argued that in spite of contractual obligations that may have limited hours of work required, managers instead face organizations that demand “personal attachment and a generalized, diffuse, *unlimited* commitment” (p. 63, italics added). The trend to work long hours has increased in recent years. Blair-Loy (2003) uses the term “greedy institutions” to refer to a firm, a term she borrows from Coser (1974). She further argues that working to live “for biological survival does not require sixty-plus-hour workweeks, all night negotiations, extensive travel... [it] is a middle class, traditionally masculine, twentieth century urban model” (p. 19) of those who advance within organizations. Higgins and Duxbury (2002) compare time spent at

work in 1991 and 2001. Their large-scale 2001 Canadian study of 31,571 respondents, half of whom were federal public service employees and more than half of whom held managerial or professional positions, found that one in four respondents worked 50 or more hours per week. In contrast, a similar study by the authors conducted in 1991 found that only one in 10 respondents did so (Higgins & Duxbury, March 2002). Moreover, supplementary work at home had escalated from “45% in 1991 to 60% in 2001” (Duxbury & Higgins, 2006, p. 97). In a similar vein, the Canadian Index of Well Being Report (2010) found that “Canadians are struggling to meet the competing demands of a workplace that can reach out to them 24/7” (preface), with women reporting more time pressures than men.

One main reason why today’s workers are experiencing time pressures is the blurring of lines between work and home created by new communications technologies. Duxbury, who has conducted extensive research on work-life conflict and the cost to the health of Canadians, commented in an interview with the Ottawa Citizen (2008) that “a public service – especially among the ranks of senior and middle managers – ...has become a slave to the BlackBerry, wired to the job 24/7, at the expense of productivity and efficiency”. In this way, home has become an extension of the office.

Face-time at work is often equated with commitment and even output. As Bailyn (1997) puts it “putting in time – being visibly at work, often for long hours...is seen as a sign of commitment, of loyalty, of competence and high potential, and in many cases as an indicator, in and of itself, of productive output” (p. 211). Moreover, Lewis (1997) argues that employees who work reduced hours or non-standard schedules are less likely to be promoted.

In sum, long hours of work seem to be a reality in today's workplace, particularly for those in managerial positions and/or who hope to advance in their careers. This "requirement" to work long hours also seems to be a hidden factor underlying work-life tensions. As Jacobs and Gerson (2001) note, "work commitments are encroaching on the needs of family life" (p. 41). The present study has paid attention to this issue in terms of both the personal and organizational factors shaping participants' careers.

Work-Family Tensions

Although there has been considerable research on work-family issues in general, there is a dearth of research linking work-family issues to career advancement (Lyness & Judiesch, 2008). In a study of female college students, Bridges (1987) found that the most attractive life model cited by the students was to combine the roles of wife, mother and career woman. Gordon and Whelan-Berry (2005) found that some women highly value both their work and family roles. However, other research reminds that many women realize that this ideal combination is much more difficult to accomplish in reality. The Canadian Index of Well-being (CIW) report that "Canadians are caught in a time crunch...women, especially, are feeling the pressure....taking on the lion's share of raising children and providing care to seniors" (CIW, 2010, preface). In a study of 999 employees in a large professional service firm in Canada, women were interested in alternate career paths in order to balance work and family demands. However, Burke (2000) found that in order to advance in their career women felt they needed to "sacrifice family" (p. 925).

More specific to the present study, there is evidence suggesting that professional and executive women face work-family tensions that may influence their careers. Kirchmeyer (2002) found that marriage and children resulted in fewer promotions to executive levels for women than for men. Tharanou (1999) supports this point; despite women having similar developmental opportunities as men, women had more job interruptions due to family responsibilities, fewer international moves and intentions to stay in their jobs. Cinnamon and Rich (2002), assessed the importance professional women and men placed on work, spousal and parental roles. The women in the study differed in the emphasis they placed on the relative importance of work versus family, as follows: 40% placed equal importance on work and family; 44% placed more emphasis on family, and 16% placed more emphasis on work. Less than half gave equal value to both work and family, suggesting that for many women work and family are not easily balanced. Some research has suggested that remaining childless may be a career advancement strategy for some women. For example, Hewlett (2002) argues that many executive women are single and childless for whatever reasons.

Other researchers have questioned the emphasis on inter-role *conflict*. Ezzedeen and Richie (2009) studied married women with children and found many factors which helped them still have successful careers. Moreover, some scholars have framed the work and family relationship in a positive light in the sense that “human energy is a potentially expandable resource” (Barnett & Gareis, 2006, p. 209). To be more specific, several theorists consider that the benefits of having multiple roles far outweigh stresses and costs that multiple roles incur (Rothbard, 2001; Sieber, 1974). This view of “expansionism”, purports that multiple roles may be advantageous as one role enhances

the others. Multiple roles can serve as an energizing factor fostering a positive sense of well-being. Positive experiences of cross-role energy transfer, positive work and home experiences, and the acquisition of social contacts (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Sieber, 1974) may also be linked to career advancement. Barnett and Gareis suggest that women gain a great sense of satisfaction from having multiple roles both in the workplace, at home, and in their communities. A large (N=10,943) international study of managers by Lyness and Judiesch (2008) found that even in high pressure environments, “conscientiousness” enabled the women to balance their work and life; moreover those who were better able to manage work and life tended to do well in their career advancement.

As shown above, literature on the relationship between work and family is an important issue for women. Therefore, the present study has explored the issue of the influence of children on participants’ careers.

Given that work-family tensions appear to create challenges for women, family-friendly policies in their workplaces can help women cope with some of these challenges. Perrone, Wright and Jackson (2009) suggest that the burden of offering family-friendly policies should not only rest on an employer but that employees should also suggest options to employers that would fit both their needs and that “often flexible arrangements can be negotiated on an individual basis” (p. 19). Many organizations have implemented family-friendly policies to help employees balance work and family. In a study of 999 employees in a large professional service firm in Canada, Burke (2000) found that women were aware of such policies within their organizations. Noonan, Estes, and Glass (2007) found that, in comparison to men, women tended to use flexible policies in the

workplace to manage child-care and housework. Notwithstanding the findings of Noonan and colleagues, some evidence suggests that actual implementation and use of family-friendly policies appears to be less frequent than one might assume (e.g., Conference Board of Canada, 2010; Duxbury & Higgins, 2008). For example, Duxbury and Higgins' multi-year study (2001-2008) that reviewed work-life conflict within Canada's largest employers (including employees in the CFPS), found that "despite all the talk about being 'family-friendly', many of Canada's largest employers have not yet implemented flexible work arrangements and only a minority of the employees in the 2001 sample report high perceptions of flexibility in terms of work time and work location" (p. 55). Beauregard and Henry (2009) note that organizations featuring an embedded long-hours culture and unaccommodating attitudes among managers and co-workers tend to discourage employees from making use of work-life practices ostensibly available to them. Blair-Loy (2003) found that "many professional employees are reluctant to use these [family-friendly] policies out of fear for their career advancement" (p. 197).

Partner Support

As increases in dual earner couples become more prevalent, working women and their partners face career decisions that may affect the other partner (McQuillan, 1998; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2007). According to a recent Bureau of the Census report, dual earner families have become the most prevalent family type with children under the ages of 18. Larochelle, Côté and Dionne (2009) have found that sometimes "when work is intensive, one partner has standard hours while the other may work long hours" (p. 17). Some couples have found it helpful to place emphasis on one partner's career over the other's for a certain period of time (Neault, 2005). Yet, typically, it is the husband's

career that takes precedence (Bartley, Blanton & Gilliard, 2005; Ezzedeen & Ritchey, 2008; Sweet & Moen, 2006), in part because of an entrenched and longstanding belief in the breadwinner/homemaker “model” for men and women respectively. Moreover, Sweet and Moen consider that there is a “cumulative disadvantage for women and a cumulative advantage for men over time” (pp. 195-96) when women’s careers take second place to those of men’s.

Ezzedeen and Ritchey (2008) note that “little is known about the spousal support received by married executive women and the support behaviors that they value...research remains lacking...in understanding the spousal support that a working woman values, in particular when she holds an executive position”. (pp. 1107-1108). In a qualitative study of 20 senior and executive level women, they found that emotional (encouragement and understanding) and esteem (respect and validation) support were the most valued forms of spousal support identified by participants.

Gender is still considered a factor that determines what men and women expect of each other according to how they view their respective roles (Duxbury & Higgins, 2006). These socially constructed roles may account in part for the tensions women experience between their work and home lives. Although traditional family roles have been changing over the years (Lease, 2003; McQuillan, 1998), the trend of household labour is not seen as having reached equitable levels as yet. Statistics Canada (2005) found that women, in comparison to men, bore the main responsibility for household chores, whether or not they worked outside the home. Bartley and colleagues (2005) point out that men tend to do tasks in which they have high control over such as mowing the lawn which can be done today or tomorrow, whereas women “get stuck with” (p. 77) tasks over which they

have low control – in other words, tasks that have to be done on daily basis – such as feeding the family.

Given that there is a lot more to be learned about how women manage diverse work-life-family-partner tensions in relation their career development and advancement, it is hoped that more light will be shed on these issues through the stories of the participants in the present study.

Organizational Networks

According to Woolcock (1998) organizational networks are a form of social capital which incorporate “norms and networks facilitating collective actions for mutual benefits” (p. 155). Networks are social relations which may prove helpful to individuals in their attempts to acquire some kind of economic or non-economic benefit (White, 2002). Indeed, researchers have overwhelmingly argued for establishing and developing multiple workplace relationships, and noting how this is an important career-building strategy (Burt, 1992, 1998; 2000; Granovetter, 1973; Higgins & Kram, 2001; Sparrowe, Liden, Wayne, & Kraimer, 2001; Wang, 2009a). Moreover, Metz and Tharanou (2001) maintain that women especially need to avail themselves of social ties within organizations when attempting to advance to higher levels within hierarchies.

According to Burt (1992), a person’s developmental network is a component of their entire social network. As noted above, one’s networks can be considered in a broad sense as a form of social capital. Moreover, Burt (2000) argues that those who acquire social capital in the form of networks are better connected and, therefore, do better in their careers. Being well connected means having an influential, established network.

Nahapiet and Ghosal (1998) argue that an individual's relationships have the ability to provide them access to information, available opportunities, and possibly further resources. Researchers identify two types of social capital that may be acquired: hard social capital and soft social capital. According to Ibarra (1993) hard social capital is considered to be influential ties arising through work-related exchanges of resources which may include receiving advice, sharing contacts, coaching, and being offered protection as well as assistance in finding challenging and visible assignments. Soft social capital is considered as being socio-emotional support which Ibarra (1993) considers as the kind of support which requires a high level of trust and close relationships. Successful networks are those that become a valuable source of action and interaction by those in the network for purposes of finding other jobs and helping others reciprocally. Networks take considerable time to cultivate and nurture; and trust is also established over time. Granovetter (1995) adds that people use their social capital in developing networks over time which may prove beneficial in helping them find jobs in hidden markets. Men tend to establish more hard social capital ties and women tend to seek out more soft social capital which may serve to help them, according to Quinlan (1999), to obtain the social support necessary to survive in a male-dominated workplace.

Duxbury et al. (1999), who have extensively studied Canadian public service workers, highlight the importance of networking in building one's career. They stress that employees who have broad networks "perform [their] job more effectively [because they] have access to more sources of information and expertise. Networking increases...visibility and...opportunities for learning. [It] builds networks with a broader pool of people who can provide career advice and support" (p. 37 of 253).

Only a few empirical studies have linked career outcomes to networking behaviours (Forret & Dougherty, 2004). One example is Forret and Dougherty's 2001 and 2004 analyses of a quantitative survey of 418 business school alumni from a large American midwestern state university over a 35-year period. One important finding in their 2001 analysis was that individuals who had "an advanced degree, who had less work experience, and who worked more hours per week were significantly more likely to engage in networking behaviours" (p. 302). The authors speculate that this may be due to a greater emphasis on and opportunities for networking in business schools, a perception of the importance of networking by individuals with less experience, and the opportunity to become more visible through being invited to "work on highly visible assignments or to attend impromptu social events" due to working longer hours (p. 303). Another important finding of their 2001 analysis was that men tend to engage in networking more frequently than women. The authors speculate that this may be due in part to women's child-raising responsibilities, although they suggest that this pattern may be changing.

Forret and Doherty's 2004 analysis found evidence that there were positive relationships between some, but not all, networking behaviours and promotions, compensation, and perceived career success (success as evaluated by the individuals themselves). They found that increasing internal visibility – but not maintaining external contacts – was linked to promotions, compensation and perceived career success. They speculate that networking within the organization can lead to more opportunities, whereas maintaining contacts with outsiders (for example, handing out business cards, sending e-mails and calling business contacts to keep in touch) (p. 431) are less effective in part

because these are based on superficial relationships that may not lead to further career opportunities within one's organization.

Formal women-only networks may not be as beneficial to women as might be expected. Bierema (2005) conducted a qualitative study of ten Fortune 500 women in an executive women's network that was specifically set up by various organizations with approximately 30,000 employees world-wide. The initiative, which was meant to "improve the recruitment, retention and advancement of women....failed miserably and was disbanded" (pp. 207, 213). Rather than helping women, the network attempt failed in part because the women's "power [was] diminished by association with a women's group" (217), and that they didn't want to be seen as needing extra help. Moreover, although the women had been sharing information regarding company issues, the men had suggested that the network's purpose was for the women to exchange recipes and male bash. According to the author, the findings suggest that the network failed due to the patriarchal culture of the entire organization and to an inhospitable climate which stifled increased knowledge about gender power relationships.

In the present study I have made a point to explore the role that organizational networks have played in the career development and advancement of participants. Through listening to their stories, one is able to learn the extent to which networks have played a role in their careers as well as how these networks have been developed and used.

Career Developers

Researchers have traditionally supported the notion in career development of having a mentor/protégé relationship as a positive way to help a person's career (Hall;

1976; Hall & Kram, 1981; Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson, & McKee, 1978; Kram, 1985; Kram & Hall, 1996). Mentoring as defined by Eby (1997) is “an intense developmental relationship whereby advice, counselling, and developmental opportunities are provided to a protégé by a mentor, which, in turn, shapes the protégé’s career experiences” (p. 126). Higgins and Kram (2001) provide a definition of a traditional mentoring relationship as being “one in which a senior person working in the protégé’s organization assists with their personal and professional development” (p. 265). This definition is similar to one by Kram (1985) and Ragins and McFarlin (1990).

Although researchers tend to focus on mentoring relationships as a dyad, involving a mentor/protégé relationship, this ignores the point that some individuals may be important resources in that they are willing to help several people develop their careers by providing psycho-social support and career development opportunities. Higgins and Kram (2001) make the point that these individuals are considered as being different from the traditional mentor/protégé relationship. Various names have been attributed to individuals who are able to offer some form of developmental relationship; for example, words that have been used to describe these individuals are: mentor, sponsor, coach, and peer (Chao, 1998). Higgins and Kram (2001) however, propose the term “developers”. It should be pointed out that this in no way means that all people in one’s social or work-related network are developers.

According to Ibarra and Andrews (1993), the relationship may be with one or with *several* individuals who may have previously been called ‘advisors’ who helped individuals shape their careers by offering various career enhancing strategies. Gersick, Bartunek and Dutton (2000) list counselling, friendship and modelling among some of

the characteristics of those who help develop others' self-esteem (Bandura, 1997) and who contribute towards helping others establish their professional identities. This type of support is considered to be a more reflective type of socio-emotional support.

Several researchers have used the concept of various patterns and strength of ties within networks (Bartol & Zhang, 2007; Burt, 1997, Ibarra, 1997; Nahapiet & Ghosal, 1998; Hezlett & Gibson, 2007, Granovetter, 1973). Burt (1992, 2000) and Granovetter (1973) have demonstrated how diverse networks can broaden one's contacts in a variety of social circles. This point is important because such networks can include "developers" and those connected to the developers, who are in a position to enhance an individual's career opportunities. Burt (2000), using Bourdieu's social capital concept, developed rather sophisticated and complex network structures to demonstrate how "certain people or certain groups are connected to certain others, trust(ing) certain others, [are] obligated to support certain others, [and are] dependent on exchange with certain others" (p. 347). Burt, also drawing from Granovetter's (1973) concepts of strong and weak ties, demonstrates how it is not the *number* of people that one is connected to but the *type* of people that makes the difference as to whether they can help with information-sharing which may lead to career advancement. The definition of 'strong ties' are "ties to those people within an individual's immediate social network, such as family and close friends" (Enns, Malenick and Matthew, 2008), whereas weak ties are "ties to people who are not within [the individual's] immediate social network such as acquaintances, co-workers and friends of close friends" Enns, et al., 2008, p. 257). Burt suggests that weak ties are better in helping one acquire and share information and for helping one find a job, which leads to career advancement due to the nature of the relationship.

Similarly, Parks-Yancy, DiTomaso and Post (2006) suggest that while strong ties may be useful in helping individuals find their first job, due to a lack of established networks, strong ties may not be as effective as weak ties in helping people later on in their careers because these latter ties are more diverse and provide access to a greater number of individuals who can provide greater access to others (Enns et al., 2008). Strong ties tend to provide redundant information whereas weak ties do not. Burt (2000) considers that weak ties, therefore, are better for information exchanges which enable the spanning between what he calls “structural holes” (p. 353); they are seen as a type of bridge to others who are better positioned to share important information which might help an individual develop their career. Furthermore, those higher up in the hierarchy are considered by Burt as providing a measure of valuable borrowed social capital accessible to the subordinate.

For purposes of this study, I use the term “career developers”, which refer to individuals, usually superiors or former superiors, who have provided participants with various forms of support in the development and/or advancement of their careers.

In sum, this chapter has presented the purpose of the study and the three guiding research questions as well as the conceptual framework that underpins the study. Nine sensitizing concepts form the basis of the conceptual framework, a framework that attempts to consider how certain personal and organizational factors may have helped shape the careers of women who have reached the pre-executive and entry executive levels within the CFPS. The first two of these concepts, the historical overview of women in the CFPS and the acronyms and terminology sections, have been included primarily to provide needed context for readers who are unfamiliar with this large organization.

Conceptual and research literature related to the other seven concepts – Bourdieu’s concepts of habitus, capital and field; self-efficacy; serendipity; formal education and professional development; work-life conflict; organizational networks; and career developers – has also been presented with a view to considering how both personal and organizational factors may have shaped the career development and advancement of pre-executive and entry executive level women within the CFPS. Together the seven sensitizing concepts have proven helpful in guiding the direction of this study. I now turn to Chapter 3, which presents the methodology used to conduct this study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative research is helpful to explore, understand, and explain a social phenomenon. It is particularly useful for studying a complex issue, understanding the contexts in which the issue is experienced, and empowering “individuals to share their stories [and] hear their voices” about this overall experience (Creswell, 2007, p. 40).

This qualitative research study was grounded in a social constructivist paradigm which has guided the research both ontologically and epistemologically. Schwandt (1994) contends that “objective knowledge and truth is a result of perspective. Knowledge and truth are created, not discovered” (p. 125). The inquiry has aimed to understand women’s complex career development processes from a holistic perspective; Creswell (1994) maintains that this type of approach can be best achieved through the words of participants who have lived the experience. Similarly, Clandinin (2007) argues that narrative inquiry “begins in experience as expressed in stories lived and told [and that] it can be connected and placed under the label of qualitative research methodology...The method and the inquiry always have experiential starting points that are informed by and intertwined with theoretical literature that informs either the methodology or an understanding of the experiences with which the inquirer began” (p. 5). Since narrative inquiry involves the recollection of lived experiences within a social context, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) believe that any inquiry needs to examine four directions: inward, outward, backward and forward. Inward means focusing on “feelings, hopes, aesthetic reactions, and moral dispositions” which address personal and social issues, and outward considers the context or environment

by “not only looking to the event but to its past and to its future [whereas] backward and forward means moving between the past, present and future...[and also paying attention] to the specific concrete physical and topological boundaries of inquiry landscapes (pp. 50-51).

This inquiry can be considered what Merriam (2001) refers to as a “basic or generic qualitative study” (p. 11) in that it has sought to “discover and understand a phenomenon...or the perspectives and worldviews of the people involved” (p. 11). In this type of approach, which is very common in education studies (Merriam), data are often collected through interviews, findings emphasize description and analysis, and analysis emerges from “the identification of recurring patterns...that cut through the data” (p. 11). This inquiry can also be considered a “topical life story” (Plummer, 1995; Zitzelsberger, 1998) in that it focuses on participants’ career life stories during the time they were working within the CFPS. The inquiry does not attempt to capture individuals’ entire lives but rather explores a specific issue during a particular period of their lives.

Research Participants

The present study has focused on a diverse group of ten women within two CFPS groups: either at the EX-minus-01 level or the EX-01 level. The EX-minus-01 level individuals are generally considered middle managers who are one level below the executive cadre; the EX-01 is the entry level of the executive cadre (see also Figure 2 in Chapter 2).

It was felt that ten participants who would each be interviewed for three one-hour periods would provide enough information to identify within-case and cross-case patterns

and to develop salient themes (see also Data Collection in this chapter). What's more, from a practical point of view, the decision to interview ten participants helped ensure that the study would be doable.

My aim was to use a modified maximum variation sampling strategy (Creswell, 2007) in that I hoped to include women of relatively different ages, with diverse family compositions, and if possible from various employment equity groups and/or with different sexual orientations. According to Creswell, maximum variation sampling “increases the likelihood that the findings will reflect differences or different perspectives – an ideal in qualitative research” (p. 126). I recruited some participants through making telephone calls to former colleagues or superiors – what Burt (2000) refers to as one's weak ties – whom I knew were in the target population. Although I didn't know it at the time, it is notable in retrospect that the “weak ties” that helped me recruit some of the participants parallel a key finding within the study itself, namely, that participants' weak ties have been instrumental in helping them advance in their careers. I also used a snowball sampling strategy (Creswell, 2007). as I identified potential participants, I asked if they could suggest additional names of individuals who met the study criteria and who might be interested in participating in the study. As part of the ethics approval process, I developed and sent them an interview recruitment letter (see Appendix D); I also developed a Consent Form which was signed by those who agreed to participate (see Appendix E). I also prepared a bilingual (English-French) poster that was acceptable for official posting within various federal government departments (see Appendix F); however, the posters proved unnecessary.

The ten participants include two Aboriginal women, one Black woman, and seven Caucasians. The two Aboriginal women did not speak of their Aboriginal status as having had any impact on their careers; therefore, I did not pursue this further during the interview. Moreover, I have not identified them by name in order to preserve their anonymity. The Black participant did refer to herself as part of the visible minority group and spoke of how this has impacted upon her career. Therefore, this fact has been included in the analysis. One participant referred to her partner using a feminine name and pronoun; I therefore kept the gender consistent with her words. I did not pursue her possible different sexual orientation further because she never openly discussed this aspect of her career life story with me.

In order to preserve anonymity, pseudonyms were used in place of real names and some factual details that do not impinge upon the analysis have been modified. Each woman was offered the opportunity to choose her own pseudonym, which they all did. Fortuitously, each pseudonym begins with a different letter, which made it easier for me to remember who was who. All participants at the time of the interviews were working in a CFPS department in the National Capital Region (Ottawa, Ontario and neighbouring Gatineau, Quebec). As a group, participants worked in 14 different departments over the course of their CFPS careers. To further protect their anonymity I have not identified specific departments where they have worked. As noted elsewhere (see Chapter 2), departments varied in size from small (fewer than 400 employees), to medium (400 to 3,000 employees) to large (more than 3,000 to almost 25,000 employees) (Public Service Commission, 2004). Also, it should not be assumed that the two participants who have worked in the North were Aboriginal. Furthermore, it should not be assumed that these

individuals had worked in the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada because many federal departments in the North have offices with Aboriginal programs.

No participant withdrew from the study. Although it was at times difficult to schedule interviews due to participants' extremely busy schedules, they all called me to reschedule our meetings and fulfilled their original commitment to participate.

Table 2 summarizes some basic demographic information of the ten participants, who have been arranged in descending order according to their respective job category levels. As indicated, at the outset of the study the group consisted of four EX-01's and six EX-minus-01's. Because Grace became an EX-01 prior to the analysis, I have classified her as an EX-01 both in the table as well as throughout the analysis. As noted, Elizabeth became an EX-02 during the timeframe of the study; any reference to her new status has been noted throughout the study. Their ages ranged from 40 to 62. Nine participants were married or with a partner at some point during their lives; at the time of the interviews six were married and one was living with a partner. At the time of the interviews, three participants had no children, four had one child, two had two children, and one had three children.

Data Collection

The main source of data collection was interviews. These were supplemented by a brief demographic questionnaire completed by each participant, as well as any descriptions of or actual artifacts linked to their CFPS careers that they chose to show me. Information provided through the demographic information questionnaire has been used in this chapter, in the findings chapters, and in the discussion, where warranted. A copy of the questionnaire is provided in Appendix B. Artifacts were used by Cairns

Table 2: Demographic Information of Participants, arranged in descending order according to level

Name	Age	No. of Children	Family Status	Group & Level Beginning of Study	No. of years in CFPS	Group & Level Beginning Of Study	Group & Level Last Stages of Study
EX-01's							
Elizabeth	42	3	Married	EX-01	14	EX-02	EX-02
Laurie	50	2	Previously married; now single	EX-01	25	EX-01	EX-01
Ann	55	1	Previously married; now single	EX-01	25	EX-01	EX-01
Wanda	42	0	With Partner	EX-01	18	EX-01	EX-01
Grace	42	0	Married	EX-minus-01	14	EX-01	EX-01
EX-minus-01's							
Susan	40	2	Married	EX-minus-01	10	EX-minus-01	EX-minus-01
Megan	62	1	Married	EX-minus-01	7	EX-minus-01	EX-minus-01
Becky	54	1	Married	EX-minus-01	30	EX-minus-01	EX-minus-01
Cate	48	1	Single mother	EX-minus-01	20	EX-minus-01	EX-minus-01
Olivia	48	0	Married	EX-minus-01	15	EX-minus-01	EX-minus-01

(2001) who found that the use of women's treasured possessions in her counseling practices were particularly useful in helping her elicit explanations and gain further glimpses into women's lives during her interviews. Cairns sees "individuals whose life stories, though little known, resonate with the evidence [from artifacts] of unsuspected talent, intelligence, perception, achievement, strength, and persistence in the face of often overwhelming life circumstances" (p. 3). The idea behind my asking about possible artifacts was to draw out some of their recollections of participants' career experiences through artifacts they have collected over the years in the CFPS, and they also helped me find out more about them as individuals. For example, they showed me various items such as a manual that had been drafted many years ago that was linked to an important experience; an award or letter for exceptional performance; photographs of themselves wearing traditional Inuit clothing or cherished items particular to their lives and work in the North (e.g., an Amauti – a mother's Arctic Inuit parka designed with a pouch to keep the child warm; soapstone carvings); or artifacts displayed in their offices that held some special significance (e.g., post-it note holder, degrees, personal posters, pictures of prominent people they feel a kindred connection to).

In order to allow for "richness, depth, nuance, context, multi-dimensionality and complexity" (Mason, 2002, p. 1), and realizing that career development exploration needs to be considered within a personal and organizational context, I decided to use a three-interview process of approximately one hour each. According to Atkinson (2002) "much can be learned about a person's life in a two- or three-part interview that extends over three hours" (p. 132). The first interview set the tone, aimed to solicit a broad picture, and encouraged participants to tell their stories in a free-flowing and reflective manner while

making sense of their career life stories within the context of the CFPS. The second interview clarified issues or comments made during the first interview and delved into participants' careers on a more conceptual level by focusing specifically on personal characteristics and factors which participants believed had helped shape their careers. The third interview began by focusing on the organizational factors that participants believed have helped shape their career progression. This interview also explored how personal characteristics and organizational factors may have intersected to help shape their career progression. The interview guide can be found in Appendix C. As it turned out, the first two interviews were often combined into a longer session lasting two hours or more due to their busy and unpredictable schedules. It should also be noted that in one case the third interview did not take place due to the individual being on long-term leave; and in another case, the individual could not be available for a face-to-face third interview and therefore responded to my questions by e-mail.

It should be noted that the interview questions were not asked nor answered in a particular order; instead, I made a point to tell participants that they had the freedom to speak about their career progression in the CFPS in any order they wished, and to return at any time to any portion of their career life story in order to add further details. I also gave each participant a copy of her transcribed interviews soon after the interviews had taken place, and each person was invited to make any changes as she saw fit. Only one participant – Ann – made significant revisions, at times removing or adding certain details.

I mentioned to participants ahead of time that I would not interrupt them so that they would not lose their train of thought; and I strove to do this throughout the

interviewing process. This strategy worked very well in that most participants talked readily and needed few prompts from me. Two participants were less forthcoming and needed me to intervene and ask questions to encourage them to go on with their stories. The transcripts themselves bear out the success of this strategy of non-interruption. During the interviews, I wrote notes on points that needed clarification and returned to these at various points when the opportunity arose. My note-taking was greatly facilitated by my ability to use Pitman shorthand. Occasionally I later contacted them to clarify various points that had been glossed over during the interviews. It should be noted that participants shared very personal stories, both positive ones as well as those that were painful to recollect and articulate. In a few cases, to protect their privacy, I have chosen to omit particularly painful personal stories and modified others in ways that did not undermine the integrity of the analysis. I felt I was able to establish a good rapport and a comfortable relationship in all cases. The fact that I also work for the CFPS may have contributed to their sense of comfort and good faith; this factor also meant that they did not need to stop to explain each and every CFPS term or acronym that they used. Overall, I felt that the interviews were very successful in that I learned much about their career development and advancement during their time in the CFPS. Having said that, I acknowledge that life stories can never really capture one's life experiences. As Goodson (2001) notes, life stories "are lives interpreted and made textual. They represent a partial, selective commentary on lived experience" (p. 138).

Throughout the data collection process it was necessary to maintain my own balance since I was delving into the personal lives of the women I interviewed.

Data Management and Analysis

In all, the interviews yielded almost 1,000 double-spaced pages of transcripts. Although Seidman (2006) notes that “interviewers who transcribe their own tapes come to know their interviews better”, he also recognizes that the job can be very demanding and time-consuming, so much so that the interviewer may lose enthusiasm; hence, he maintains that the “ideal solution” is to hire a transcriber (p. 115). In my own case, because of my past extensive typing and dictaphone experiences, I had no problem whatsoever in completing the transcriptions; in fact, I thoroughly enjoyed listening to the stories, which brought me back to the interviews themselves, replete with giggles, laughter, facial expressions, and so on, that captured the various emotions behind their words. Moreover, by doing my own transcribing, I was able to re-experience how busy these women really were; it was not unusual to be interrupted during our scheduled meetings by urgent telephone calls and briefing note revisions – a theme that has become one of the important findings of the study. Following Seidman’s suggestion, I was careful to note these various types of research evidence that went beyond the spoken word.

I also relied on my shorthand skills throughout the analysis process, for example, during brainstorming meetings with my advisor, when summarizing pertinent literature, when reflecting on discussion points, and so on. These were sometimes transcribed to give me a better outline and sense of direction for the study.

I used a number of strategies to become familiar with the contents of the interviews and to identify and develop important within-case and cross-case patterns. As Seidman (2006) stresses, “There is no substitute for total immersion in the data” (p. 128). I read and re-read each interview numerous times, jotting down preliminary ideas in the

margins. To grasp the overall sense of each individual's unique life story, I also wrote a somewhat condensed version of their transcripts. I made the decision early on to not use a specialized qualitative research computer program, but instead relied heavily on manual manipulation of the data, basic word processing cut-and-paste strategies as well as highlighting and word-search tools. As I became more familiar and comfortable with cross-case patterns, I first tried to colour code interview data according to various categories, but found this to be extremely difficult because a given excerpt could link to several themes. I also created large binders of excerpts from all of the participants based on various promising themes. These strategies, together with the fact that I had transcribed the interviews myself, made it possible for me to know the contents of the interviews so well that I was able to eventually even recall participants' actual words when consulting the transcripts to find or verify excerpts to ensure accuracy.

In order to ensure that the voices of participants were respected, the cross-case analysis relies heavily on two types of participant excerpts: short paragraph-long quotes that have been indented and embedded quotes that “consume little space and provide specific concrete evidence, in the informant's words, to support a theme” (Creswell, 2007, p. 182). It should also be pointed out that the cross-case analysis was carried out as a group; in other words, not all participants referred to a given issue each time. I was careful to use terms such as one, several, the majority, many, and most in order to give a sense of the breadth of responses across the group.

Trustworthiness

According to Seidman (2006) “internal consistency over a period of time leads one to trust that [one] is not lying to the interviewer” (p. 25) (See also Atkinson, 2002). In the

present study, over the course of interviews with each participant there was a sense of internal consistency and authenticity regarding their stories. For example, it was not uncommon for a participant to return to a given anecdote from a prior interview in order to expand upon a situation. Also at times they laughed at the situations they were recollecting, whereas at other times their voices dropped dramatically when describing particularly difficult moments. I was also careful to not put words in their mouths or to redirect their thinking in ways that would compromise the way they portrayed their understandings of their stories.

Of course, the findings of the present study are not generalizable; this is true for all qualitative studies. Rather, the goal has been *transferability* in the sense that it is hoped that through the use of “rich, thick description” (Creswell, 2007, p. 209) of the career lives of the ten participants that readers will be able to draw connections between the findings and their own contexts and experiences.

Trustworthiness can also be captured through the metaphor of the crystal (Janesick, 2000). Richardson (1994) argues that the concept of the crystal is much more appropriate than the more conventional metaphor of the triangle in discussing the issue of validity in qualitative research. According to Richardson, “Crystals are prisms that reflect externalities and refract within themselves, creating different colors, patterns, arrays, casting off in different directions....crystallization provides us with a deepened, complex, thoroughly partial, understanding of the topic” (p. 522). In the same way, each of the ten participants in the present study had unique career life stories made up of numerous one-of-a-kind experiences. At the same time, taken together, there are elements of

commonality across their stories that help us understand a larger more complex phenomenon, albeit only partially.

Limitations and Delimitations

With the exception of some basic background information about participants' lives, the scope of the present study is largely limited to their career life stories during their time in the CFPS; and of course, recruitment was limited to those individuals currently working in the CFPS. Also, participants as a group varied greatly in terms of how long they had worked in the CFPS. For example, Laurie, aged 50, has worked in the CFPS all of her working life; Elizabeth aged 42, has spent 14 years in the CFPS after having worked for five years in private industry after having completed her undergraduate degree; and Megan, aged 62, has been with the CFPS for only seven years. Therefore, the analysis presented here does not take into account their prior work experiences elsewhere, other than in a few specific situations.

Readers will observe that there is, to some extent, a disproportionate amount of detail in participants' stories focusing on the more recent years of their CFPS careers. This is not surprising given that more recent memories were likely to be more in the foreground when they retold their everyday career lives. What's more, the purpose of the present study was to explore the career progression of female managers in their transition towards and into executive levels.

Another limitation of this study is that I consciously did not associate individuals with specific departments, branches, directorates, programs and so on. I recognize that these organizations have in some ways differing organizational cultures. There are two

main reasons for my decision: first, to help preserve participant anonymity and second, because many individuals tended to move across CFPS departments.

This inquiry did not aim to consider how their CFPS careers have unfolded compared to those of their male colleagues. In fact, I did not attempt to make any gender comparisons; I have chosen to focus on women's CFPS careers only.

It is also important to note that a vast amount of learning that could help an individual's career is on-the-job tacit learning. For the most part, this study has not focused on the concept of informal experiential learning per se. However, many of the stories and comments within the study have nonetheless demonstrated that this type of learning continually takes place over the course of one's career.

Researcher as Instrument

Given that the qualitative researcher becomes in a sense the 'research instrument' (Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Merriam, 2001), it is important for me to provide some background information about my own life and career.

I have now been with the CFPS for more than twenty years. My career began in the CFPS in a permanent job as a stenographer when I was 15 years old after grade 12. I would take down 50 letters at a time on a shorthand pad, type them up and return them to the several managers I worked for at the time. I had been fortunate enough when in high school to have a new principal who implemented a new program: academic, with shorthand and typing as options. Although I disliked shorthand, I have come to appreciate my strict Scottish teacher much more now, but I always loved typing – both these skills have proven useful throughout my career as well as for this PhD process. After that summer with the CFPS, I decided that there had to be more to life than that type of work

and returned to complete Grade 13. Afterwards, even though I went to Ottawa Hydro and told them I wanted to be a linesman, they responded that they had no secretarial work for me – no women were linesmen at that time. After having worked again in a secretarial field for two years, I again became dissatisfied, quit my job, moved away from home, got a student loan and went to Teacher's College. The first year I was offered a contract, with the Ottawa Board of Education, mainly because I spoke French. I taught French from Kindergarten to grade 4 for one year, and subsequently changed schools and taught all subjects to classes of up to 42 children in combined classes (grades 3/4 and 5/6) for the next six years. I also coached Girl's Captain Basketball and Boys' Grade 6 soccer.

In between teaching contracts, I worked for at least six weeks each summer through a temporary agency, mainly for the CFPS. It was nice to work with adults and this helped me keep my typing, dictaphone and shorthand skills current. I worked two of those summers at Health Canada. Although I was asked to stay and become a supervisor, each summer I worked in different CFPS departments and then chose to return to the teaching profession each fall.

I married, moved to Montreal and my teaching qualifications from Ontario were deemed invalid in Quebec because I did not have a degree. I did substitute teaching occasionally and even though the principal told me he would love to have hired me, he could not do so due to my lack of a degree. Needing a steady job, I again reverted to being 'a secretary' and when I could go no higher after a few years in each job, I moved on. I was fortunate in having a boss in one job whom I admired greatly for his kindness, his great sense of humour and, most of all, his professionalism. I still meet my former boss and the team I worked with once a year in Montreal at Christmastime. When my

boss recognized that I was bored with my job, he offered me something else. Although I did the job for eight months, I did not particularly like it since it did not involve working with people but mainly with a computer and communicating over the telephone. Through this experience I learned that I enjoyed work dealing with people rather than working in isolation with technology.

After having worked in Montreal for eleven years in private industry, I divorced and moved to Ottawa where I worked again in the CFPS, first in several term jobs then in full-time positions where I have been ever since. I found that I could complete an education degree at McGill University since they had a special program for teachers that had been certified elsewhere. I was very fortunate in being able to negotiate working more hours earlier in the morning each day with my boss and taking a few hours off one afternoon a week so I could make the two-hour bus trip to Montreal and come back the same night – this lasted for a little over two years. Although my department contributed nothing financially towards my degree since it had nothing to do with my job at the time, they did permit me the time as long as I paid it back. I also did a Second Languages Teaching Certificate. I was fortunate that I spoke French because this was a requirement to complete an English Language Teaching Certificate. I obtained my B.Ed. in 1990, waited five years, then returned to complete my M.Ed. at McGill, again commuting to Montreal.

I was happy working and going to university and I feel that my university education has helped me greatly in advancing in my career. It contributed in several ways: my degree gave me self-confidence that I could do more, I became less fearful of failing competitions in the CFPS and approached them as “if I win, I do, and if I don’t well, I’ll

try something else”; whereas, before I would have been devastated at not passing an exam for a competition. I found assignments were also less daunting because they involved an informal interview which worked for me. I no longer saw my not winning as a failure on my part, but rather that there were others who were better suited to the job. Halfway through my Masters degree, I met a male colleague who encouraged me to try progressively higher level jobs. He helped me find journals and articles for my M.Ed. courses. Later on during my PhD courses, when I felt I wouldn’t pass a statistics course, fearing it because I had never been great in math, this same colleague told me that I could do it – I worked so hard in that course and ended up with 80 percent. Most of all I appreciated my colleague’s professionalism and the way he treated me as an equal and not as someone lower on the hierarchical level than he was. He would answer my questions, always called me back when I needed advice, taught me to not take things so personally, and to view things through other lenses. I would never have been where I am today had he not believed in me – even more than I believed in myself. In turn, people often asked for my help, in preparing for competitions, or to write their resume, or to listen when they were having difficulties. I make sure I treat them as I was treated by this person and always return their telephone calls since that was something I really valued and appreciated.

During my full-time period in the CFPS and while working as an assignment coordinator, matching managers to employees, I just happened to spot a job that interested me. Even though it was three levels up from my current job at the time, I applied and got the job on a one-year assignment. I attribute this to the manager believing that I was able to write a trainer certification manual on how to teach adults because I had

an undergraduate degree in education at the time. I wasn't sure I could do it myself, but I worked with another human resource specialist and we wrote a self-directed distance learning course which is still being used today.

After one year, the assignment ended and I was threatened with a layoff in the downsizing years. I found another job at Indian and Northern Affairs Canada prior to being laid off. I worked in the Learning Centre, a job I loved. My next position, two levels higher up, happened through a rather serendipitous event. While at a meeting I had organized of representatives from the CFPS learning centres in Ottawa, one individual mentioned that someone was leaving National Defence. I found out the individual's name, called him and said, "I think I would like your job" to which he responded, "well, call my boss" and he gave me her number. I called her and got the job for a year as a Learning Advisor at the Department of National Defence two levels up from my job at that time. I have had wonderful opportunities in the CFPS, often in areas that I knew nothing about. Not wanting to go back to my former position at a lower level, I applied for a competition at the Canadian Firearms Centre two levels up from what I was temporarily doing. I got the job and was so surprised. I had even thrown out the poster because I thought I had had a terrible interview but I was told that I knew a lot about the work they needed done. There I managed Legislative Training, worked with a team of young lawyers, and managed 18 simultaneous projects, one of which was to write a Use of Force and Firearms Proficiency course for the Armoured Car Guard industry. I had a great boss, who had a sense of humour and who trusted me to pilot this course with subject matter experts. He also taught me a great deal about how to work with and handle

contractors and contracts and even took me with him to an Association of Chiefs of Police forum in Halifax.

I have been with my current department, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, for about seven years, but have been on several assignments, one as Manager of Refugee Resettlement at Citizenship and Immigration. Assignments have been a great way for me to obtain professional development through different jobs; I have met wonderful people along the way.

Over the years, while there have been those managers who have attempted to stymie my educational aspirations, I moved ahead in spite of them, did my B.Ed. on my own time evenings, and paid my own travel and university tuition. Although there were some managers in departments mentioned below that were less than supportive, either I moved on or they left. Managers in four departments that did help me, however, are worth mention. Agriculture Canada and National Defence gave me the flexibility to work earlier in the morning so that I could have one afternoon off a week to then complete my Masters at McGill University. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada were particularly helpful and paid my tuition and books through the Aboriginal Development Program for Women, and my present department, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada have been very supportive in providing me several days of professional development time, flexibility to take my holidays piecemeal, and they also permitted me to use training and development funds towards my PhD program, which I acknowledge and appreciate.

As researcher it was at times difficult to remain detached from participants speaking about the meanings they derived from their experiences (Sciarra, 1999). I truly felt that I was fortunate in having participants share extremely personal stories but at the

same time felt that assuming a “posture of indwelling” (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994) described as “being at one with the persons under investigation, walking a mile in the other person’s shoes, or understanding the person’s point of view from an empathetic rather than a sympathetic position” (p. 25) was difficult at times. Moreover, similar to Rager’s (May, 2005) experiences, various events in my own life presented challenges: I dealt with a very serious health crisis of a spouse and several serious changes in management at work. To maintain my own balance and manage my own emotional responses as well as to help me keep proper boundaries between [myself] and [my] participants (Sciarra, 1999, p. 46), I managed the process in part as per Rager’s (2005a) suggestion and “attended to my self-care while conducting my study” (pp. 428-429). I used my social network, academic peers and especially my advisor to discuss challenges, problems and emotions. Moreover, I also used Rager’s (2005b) strategy of “member checking” (p. 25) as I went through this dissertation journey.

Participant Profiles

The following participant profiles provide the reader with some background information about their personal lives as well as some basic information about their lives within the CFPS. The profiles are intended to provide glimpses into each of their unique lives prior to the subsequent chapters where cross-case analysis predominates.

Ann

Ann is 55 years of age, is an EX-01, and has been in the CFPS in the same department for more than twenty-five years. She obtained a BA in English literature and then worked in a nursing home but disliked this immensely so she then obtained a library technician certificate at a college. During a major recession, jobs were hard to find but

she found a summer job in CFPS. She then moved to the private sector in which she was made to “sharpen pencils, make coffee, empty garbage cans and fill water glasses”; Ann felt marginalized. Ann applied for, and was one of 26 people accepted into, an apprenticeship program in the CFPS where she learned organizational processes based on industrial models of the day. At the time that Ann entered her department, she recalled that her co-workers were mostly men. Having worn fancy dresses and believing, in retrospect, that she had had “no credibility” as a result of that, when Ann reached 40 she decided to make it easier on herself and stopped dying her hair, was among the first in her office to wear black pantsuits, and took the car to work instead of walking; clothes had been costing her so much that she could have purchased several cars with the money.

Ann’s father, with only a high school education, was in the Canadian Forces. She noted that he had “common sense, a natural understanding of finances, a strong work ethic and honest morality”. Her mother had high school and worked in a typing pool on a military base. All eight children were expected to attend university, although not all of them got there.

Ann at one point was married, had a child, and returned to work. She realized that her son would be better in daycare. Her husband had a regular 9 to 5 job and did not understand why she was always working – he expected her to do the majority of the childcare, housework and cooking. Her marriage did not last. Ann struggled, particularly in one job for twelve long years – no matter how hard she worked, she had a hard time keeping up with her colleagues. But as a single mother, Ann worked even harder; during downsizing periods, she was particularly worried that she would lose her job. She has had bosses who were “impatient, negative, mean-spirited; and criticism was plentiful” – she

appears to have felt beaten down in spite of having survived cutbacks. She eventually competed for and won an EX-01 job out of 350 people who had applied. She then began working extremely long hours; and her common-law relationship also failed. Ann finally asked to return to her evaluation job with no staff to manage. That same day she ended up in hospital and almost died. Although they could not pinpoint the cause of her illness, she believes that stress likely was a contributing cause. At the time of the interviews she had just returned to work and was teleworking. She had no artifacts related to her career to show me, noting: “no, there’s nothing”; but she is proud of the work she has done. Ann’s motto was “never give up” and she feels she has given everything she had to “put food on the table, [for] clothes [and to pay for] a house”. Ann was teleworking during the interviews several days a week and was thinking of retiring in a few years.

Becky

Becky, now 54 years of age, began working in the CFPS in the early 1970’s. She has risen through the ranks and is now at the EX-minus-01 level. She got her first job through asking a colleague who worked with her in retail who also worked in the CFPS, if there was a possibility of getting a job there. Being bilingual, she passed the tests and entered at one of the lowest clerical levels as a typist 1.

Due to family circumstances Becky did not go to university. However, she gradually applied for various CFPS jobs through competitive processes. Due to several difficult situations or bosses, she moved from job to job often during the 1980’s. She actually quit the CFPS for one reason or another three times, once moving to Vancouver, but eventually always returned to the CFPS. She filed and won a grievance in one case and received an apology, but could never again work through the agency she had worked

for due to having received a bad performance evaluation. Back in the CFPS, she gradually learned word processors on her own and believes that changing departments often provided her with good opportunities to learn new knowledge and skills. For example, she learned project management when she worked on international projects with Francophone countries overseas, and finance since she learned to keep manual financial and general ledgers. Becky noted that she has had little formal training but that she has learned 15 different financial systems, many of them on her own.

Becky's father had obtained his grade 12 through correspondence and her mother barely reached grade 8. She, nevertheless, spoke to her children in French which would later prove to be extremely valuable in helping Becky advance in her career. Becky has one child who is now grown; she had some difficulties earlier on in her career in finding caregivers when her husband worked out of town for long periods of time. However, when her son was still quite young, her husband became disabled, and then stayed home to care for the child. Becky shared that her husband was and still is extremely supportive. He makes meals, does housework and was the main caregiver while she was at work and during times she would have to work late.

Approximately ten years ago she won a competition two levels up from the job she held at that time. She noted that she would not have known about this job had someone not called her and told her to apply. Subsequently she has risen three levels to her EX-minus-01 level in that same department through having been given increasingly more responsibility. Becky has hired several intellectually challenged employees and once received a prestigious award, which she showed me, for providing meaningful work to several individuals. She tells us she is demanding, yet many employees, not even her

own, feel comfortable coming to her with problems. She noted that she “works hard”, often works long hours and on weekends, occasionally travels for her job, but finds her work challenging and rewarding. Becky does not feel that she would be eligible to enter the EX category because she sees that many of the competitive processes require a degree, which she doesn’t have. However, she shares that “my career has been successful up until now; – I’m happy at the level I’m at...I’m not really DRIVEN to become an executive”.

Cate

Cate is 48 years old, is presently in an EX-minus-01 position, and entered the CFPS approximately 20 years ago. She is presently on assignment in a policy area in a department that she likes very much. She has worked in several departments in the CFPS but the one she seemed to enjoy the most was with a department in the North. The artifacts Cate showed me were mainly linked to her time there. She has carvings and Aboriginal Art and a poster signed by a prominent person at the creation of Nunavut; and she has presented slide shows for her son’s kindergarten class on the North.

Armed with a Masters in Arts in Journalism and a Masters in Political Science, Cate entered the CFPS at a very low clerical level. The CFPS was just introducing computers into the workplace; and since Cate had used computers at university, this proved to be beneficial in helping her obtain contract work for short time periods. She claimed, at that time, she entered at a lower level, they hired a young man who only had a bachelor degree at \$6,000 more. Moreover, Cate sometimes felt marginalized due to not being able to use her skills from her prior educational experiences such as her writing skills.

Cate noted how her early experiences in the CFPS “set the tone for my career...[she feels that] she has spent the past “20 years fighting at every turn to prove that I can do things and I have to admit that it has given me an ‘attitude’.

Cate spoke little of her parents but did note that when she was single, one boss gave her a difficult time in taking family-related leave to go home and visit her father who had been in a coma for three months when he came out of hospital. A single mother with a child who is still quite young, Cate has often struggled with the need for flexibility due to childcare responsibilities and unplanned overtime and the face-time at the office. She also believes that her pregnancy may have set her back somewhat in her career when comparing herself to her male colleagues.

Cate considers, despite some setbacks, that she has had some good jobs in the CFPS. When she was in the North she helped communities obtain much-needed funding and considered that she made a considerable contribution. Cate has, in part, felt that she has not been supported by several managers. She noted that when managers have assumed that she is able to stay overtime, with little or no notice, she has tended to ‘push back’. Overall she considers that, although she would like a higher level job she now has her son, good friends, and she is “in a good place” with her work and personal life. She would have liked to return to work up North but feels unable to do so because of her son. She plans to stay within the CFPS and retire at 55 and then complete a Masters in Divinity to become an ordained minister noting: “this is how my life will go – this is all subject to change, of course, but for now this is my game plan”.

Elizabeth

Elizabeth, 42 years old, has been a Director (EX-01) in four departments of the CFPS since 2001, and prior to that was an EX-minus-01 since 1994. Having graduated at the top of her class at university with a Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering, and a concentration in business, she had many job offers after completing her studies. Her engineering speciality was in energy technology and environmental protection. During her five years in private industry prior to entering the CFPS, she wound up becoming “Canada’s expert” in a particular subfield, criss-crossing the country and the globe giving presentations. One of her early jobs in the CFPS was exciting; she loved her job and being recognized for her scientific capabilities. She worked long hours to get her career established and was convinced that she was going to get to the top in short order.

Elizabeth’s mother was a strong “just get it done” person, whereas her father was a “wild child, the intellectual and only one in his family who had gone to university. She and her dad would identify wildflowers, stake mining claims and collect antique bottles. She was more comfortable with boys when young, the “tomboy, the competitive middle-child and my dad’s boy” until her brother came along 7 years later.

Elizabeth exudes confidence. She would use her maternity leaves as a springboard to move to other jobs within the organization. Elizabeth, pregnant with her first child, travelled to Japan and Czechoslovakia and was “oblivious” to what having children would mean. She had never thought of moving to the CFPS, but circumstances saw her arrive into it with a good promotion. Having been with her husband since they were teenagers, she had hoped to have 4 children but now has 3, two boys who are now 16 and 13 years of age, and a daughter who is 10 years old. A puppy completes her family. She

has gone to great lengths to establish and further her career and she was quite innovative in finding ways to be able to manage it all – her husband supported her a great deal, but this was not without significant struggles. Although Elizabeth enjoys analytical and strategic work, she feels that in her current research job, they consider her to be an administrator and don't believe she can make the link to science – which saddens her. Being surrounded by people with PhD's, she is somewhat of an anomaly, and admits that this may have "limited her options". However, although she still works late at least one day a week, the upside of her current job is that she now has more time for family than she had earlier in her career.

Grace

Grace, 43 years old, was an EX-minus-01 at the beginning of the interviews but soon after the interviews she informed me that she had won a Director position at the EX-01 level. She has been in the CFPS for approximately 14 years.

Grace began her career in the CFPS after having worked in a law firm for almost ten years. She applied for a CFPS job and was invited to an exam the following day. Grace had a secretarial certificate when she first entered the CFPS. She explained how she had "stretched the truth quite a bit" since she had told them that she knew how to use word processors but really didn't know how they worked, and how during the exam there was an elderly lady who took "pity" on her; the woman typed on the processor for Grace while she told her what to say, and she got the job.

Grace indicated that although her parents were prepared to fund her university education, she declined the offer. Grace's mother stayed at home with Grace and her brother and as a young woman she felt that she would be a mother one day. However,

once she was firmly entrenched in the workforce, she changed her mind and decided that her career would take precedence. She does not have any children.

Grace's career progressed in part through her observation of what people were doing and she would think that she could do just as well, if not a little bit better. Later on, having acquired a police certificate for her CFPS security job she had been in for nine and a half years, the department separated and there were few opportunities for her there. Grace contacted a former colleague and he helped her obtain another job in his department.

She realized that she would need further education if she were to get ahead in her career and began a nine-year undertaking to complete her Bachelor of Law while working full-time and then finished it full-time the last year with partial assistance from the CFPS. Grace described how she studied for her last law exam for her degree by putting up "sticky notes" all over around the bathroom walls and by memorizing madly while taking a bath. Grace noted that a university degree was "a whole life experience" and that everyone should have an opportunity to attend for this reason. She does not, however, plan to obtain a graduate degree.

One discouraging period in Grace's CFPS career was when she had to write briefing notes in a very short turnaround time and yet had a boss that would never accept anything that anyone wrote without criticism. She called this demoralizing because "my skills were constantly questioned". In her current CFPS job, however, Grace mentioned that she felt that she has found her "niche" and loves the "rush" and the "thrill" of coming in and never knowing what is going to happen that day.

She had been ambivalent about trying to obtain an EX-01 job, noting that she attempts to balance her work and life with her husband and she loves travelling. While during our first interviews Grace noted she was happy to retire at an EX-minus-01 level, she later commented that “she was over the moon” after having won her EX-01 competition.

Laurie

Laurie, a Black woman who is 50 years of age, is an EX-01 who has been with the CFPS for almost twenty-five years. She worked in a Central Agency and in several federal government departments, one for fifteen years, among other jobs. Laurie got her first CFPS position as a summer student through the Federal Student Workplace Employment Program (FSWEP). Early on in her career, at 16 years of age she lived at home and often worked three jobs at a time to pay for her tuition. After completing her Bachelor in Mathematics and Economics, she got a summer statistics job in the CFPS, at a salary she thought was absolutely great! She completed her Masters in Mathematical Statistics, and remembers her boss being okay with her working and completing her degree at the same time and then she was “student bridged” into the CFPS permanently.

Laurie’s two children are 20 and 23 years old and away from home. She described how she felt work and home “got the best part of me”. Laurie is no longer married, but doesn’t believe that being an EX was a factor; she simply outgrew her husband saying, “he stayed where he was 20 years ago and I moved off in a different level and somehow the two things didn’t connect”.

When Laurie obtained her first EX job she was thrown into a situation where she “could have easily have sunk – and I think I came very very close to sinking and it would

have sunk my career forever” but she managed to “keep her head above water”.

Informally she has asked for advice from people whom she “trusted” enough to discuss her career and personal choices; and she has cultivated a network in the CFPS which she feels is best done informally rather than something that needs to be “artificially attended” solely for this purpose. She says that she tends to be a private person.

Laurie considers the CFPS “a beautiful place”, and has loved every single job she has had there in spite of some “horrible managers she has had along the way”. She also has had a couple of really good bosses but they too had weaknesses – no one is perfect. She enjoys managers who treat her like they would like to be treated, with respect, and managers who share information that you need to have if they expect you to provide them with good work. Laurie has often used the competitive process to apply for jobs and, on at least two occasions, shared that even when she didn’t get the jobs she applied for they nevertheless, led to something else for her. She also recognizes that the CFPS is a place where it is difficult to be creative since there are so many processes and people that, for instance, have to see a briefing note that one cannot put their own ‘spin’ on it.

Laurie had little office paraphernalia saying her awards were probably in a drawer somewhere, but she did have pictures of prominent people she liked and admired. The only black woman in this study, she shared her philosophy that “we’re all a group of racist people...we’re animals”. She told me that she has 4 blue finches and two red-throat, red breasted birds. The blue ones always sit with the blue ones and the two red ones stick together and they “never cross...never say I need to change today – they just didn’t do that”. Similarly she tends to gravitate, at parties toward black people, since she

is more comfortable with them, but said that as human beings, we have the wonderful ability to change that, living in a beautiful multicultural world.

Megan

Now 62 years old, Megan joined the CFPS only seven years ago, and has remained in the same department since then. She entered at an EX-minus-01 level. In retrospect, she believes she would have been much better off had she started working in the federal government much earlier in her career because she might have learned French earlier on and been able to find more job opportunities. She would “have liked a higher position” at one point, but does not particularly like the long hours one must work when Acting in higher level positions. She is now content to continue in her current job in which she enjoys, planning and managing projects. Megan had a physiotherapy degree and a Masters in Health Administration when she entered the CFPS. Prior to entering the CFPS Megan had worked as a physiotherapist. She worked in a hospital and with no background in computers, took a systems analyst job and surprised herself with being able to troubleshoot basic problems after having observed the work of computer technicians. She had also worked in a high technology area and then worked as a consultant prior to her CFPS career.

Megan’s mother, a head nurse in a chronic care facility, was the main breadwinner in the family and Megan considered her to be the dominant parent. Her father became unable to work when she was fairly young due to medical issues. Megan’s parents encouraged both her and her older sister to obtain a university education but only Megan did so. Megan’s father had tried to discourage her from going into physiotherapy since he wasn’t impressed by his therapists, however Megan completed that, worked in it for

awhile until she became pregnant with her daughter, her only child. She worked towards her Masters in Health Administration soon after her daughter was born. Megan suggested more women might be able to use their maternity leave to pursue some form of university education. However, she had a good baby and later on a mother's helper so she was able to obtain her degree and studied when the child was sleeping. She was also financially able to not work if she chose to.

Megan had applied to the CFPS for a position and was surprised when they called her a year later – she had forgotten that she had even applied. She has enjoyed her position in the CFPS but has had some bosses who provided little feedback on various projects she has been tasked with and finds it rather disconcerting to not be recognized for work she spends so much time on. Megan now values time away from the office and has recently applied for income leave averaging which will make it possible for her and her husband to travel south for two months each year. She will likely retire in a few years but indicated that she was not ready to retire yet. As long as she is able to have flexibility in hours of work and leave, which her boss has agreed to, she will be happy to remain in her job for a few more years.

Olivia

Olivia, 50 years of age, rose through increasingly higher categories all within the same administrative group and has been in her same department for the past 15 years. Prior to her CFPS career, and having a certificate in interior design, she could not find a job in Ottawa. She then worked in a friend's law office temporarily which ended up being a nine-year job. Then, having learned all she could and being plateaued, her mother, a federal civil servant, told her of a job that was available and asked her to try it. Even

though Olivia had wanted a break to think about what her next career move would be, she went to work for the CFPS temporarily. She wanted to say no to three different jobs she was offered subsequently, to think about where to go in her career, but her career was continuously progressing in the CFPS – and she has been there ever since. One job in accounts payable that she won through a competitive process was, to her, a terrible job. She “disliked it” - it was not “my field at all”. Olivia ended up being asked by a Deputy Minister’s executive assistant if she would work there – a job which Olivia says, “changed my life”.

Olivia’s mother had four children in five years and her father, who attended college, was a laboratory technician, a job he disliked because he had difficulty with routine and had a difficult boss so “he quit...he was an artist”. He has a serigraphy business and had a “gorgeous atelier [workshop]” but since money was not regular, her mother worked as a secretary. Olivia, the eldest, had two sisters and a brother, all of whom attended university in communications, arts, and civil engineering, respectively. She credits her father, who had three daughters, with instilling in them that girls and women could do “anything and everything” and believed that, although they would have to work for it, he would tell them not to think anything was impossible. Olivia felt that when she looked back at her friends, they hadn’t been as privileged as she was with her father, who was an “avant-gardiste and who took them skiing and sailing...[They did sports with their Dad, while her mother]...was different; she was the “provider and made sure we had everything”.

Olivia later in her career obtained a Management Development Certificate for women but felt that she knew much of what was taught and that the information would

have been more beneficial earlier on in her career. She has had several bosses who have not really been good role models throughout her career and says, “managers manage files, they don’t know how to manage people”. She claimed that in instances where there is conflict “they don’t deal with it so it becomes worse”. However, Olivia who is now managing people says it is not always easy to do.

Olivia has attempted to enter into the EX-01 level to no avail. Although she feels that she never lacked confidence in her abilities, she feels she has learned that women in her department are not very forthcoming with advice on how to advance. In her current job she notices that as a woman she can’t say what she is thinking as much as a man can in the same situation, and she has to watch everything she says or it “can stop your career”. She has observed some instances in which women were seen as being “aggressive” rather than “assertive” and believes there may even be quotas now for women in her department because it is made up of 80 percent men. Although she has no children she believes that had she had children she would ‘have been able to manage’. She is uncertain whether she wants an EX-01 position; she sees how EX’s work long hours, from 7:30 a.m. until 6:30 p.m. or longer and how they have difficulty saying “no” to more work and long hours – “that’s not a life – I don’t want that at all”.

Susan

Susan, 42 years old, is an EX-minus-01 and has been with the CFPS for almost ten years. Prior to arriving at the CFPS Susan worked in a university and provincial government so after being on contract for seven years she wanted to find something more stable. While working, she acquired a B. A. Honours and her M.A. in history, and applied for a job in the North. Although she didn’t come first on the list for the job, at 31 years of

age, she was later offered it since the first person on the list accepted a job elsewhere. Susan accepted the job and was in the North for four and a half years – she loved the North and shared artifacts with me linked to that time in her career.

Susan worked with crown attorneys on a very important pilot project and, with two other managers, managed a special initiative with 40 million dollar funding. Her two male colleagues wanted her to do the administrative functions when she first arrived but she eventually got to “do it all”; briefing notes, policy, bringing Ministers on site visits and touring with them. She came in as a program manager and ended up being a senior policy advisor. Eventually when it became clear to her that other departments were entering the North with emphasis more on scientific assessments to which she could no longer contribute, she “fortuitously met” a senior official from another CFPS department who offered her a job. She accepted it after having returned from maternity leave having had her first child at 32 years of age.

Susan’s parents were Dutch immigrants: her father was a horticulturalist and her mother would have liked to be a teacher but her father said, “a woman doesn’t go to school”. Susan believes that her mother regretted not being able to “pursue her dreams”. Her brother went to university and became a high school teacher. As a child Susan’s first brush with history was finding “beautiful arrow heads” in the fields around her house. She was convinced that “Indians lived in the woods...in loincloths and deerskins”. Since Susan’s father passed away when she was 16, she never thought she would get to university but she eventually did and, ironically, worked in an Aboriginal community.

While in the West, she married and had another child. Her husband agreed to move to Ottawa with her. Susan, not having a network in Ottawa, believes there is a “thirst for

mentoring programs for women” but that senior managers are just too busy. She is frustrated and doesn’t know where to go from here claiming that managers in the CFPS are not adequately trained to manage people nor are there any succession plans or programs to help EX-minus-01’s reach executive levels. She is a little overwhelmed after being in a department where the majority of employees were women, whereas in her present department the majority are men and she is tired of “having her voice shunted aside”. For this reason and because she was “totally exhausted of [working on the same] issues”, when badly needed program funding was cut, she took a year leave of absence from work to reflect upon what she would like to do next, career-wise. Susan returned to the CFPS three months into her leave of absence, is in her same position but has undertaken a human resource certificate program which she hopes will lead her into another direction. She has seriously considered leaving the CFPS.

Wanda

Wanda is 44 years old and has been in the CFPS for the past 18 years in the same federal department, except for a brief one-year assignment elsewhere. At the time of the interviews she had just won an EX-01 competitive process and she expected her letter of offer that same day. In her earlier career after having completed her Bachelor of Commerce, Wanda worked as a credit collector, which she didn’t find terribly exciting. She then found a job that she felt she would like to do. She began her early career in a CFPS specialized law enforcement security field where she obtained a great deal of training and was off travelling for two-week periods. This affected her personal life since she couldn’t spend time with her friends. Extensive travelling was “wearing” on her and she longed for a “normal life” where she could go to work and come home at the end of

the day. While Wanda was working in a region she filed a grievance; it was not handled very well and she eventually changed jobs and moved to Ottawa.

Wanda's father dropped out of school, lied about his age, and enlisted in the military. He was the breadwinner and did whatever he could to support them taking on odd jobs wherever he could. Wanda's mother, despite her husband's protests, "fought back" and got the highest secretarial job on a military base since she was bored and wanted to work. When it came to his children, her father did not discriminate by gender; he took all three of them along with him on fishing trips; and housework was done by the boys who also learned how to iron as well as she did. Since her mother "could not lift a paintbrush", she wanted to ensure that Wanda and her brothers would be able to get along in the world. They became independent and worked at a young age. Wanda now has a partner but has no children at the present time. She has gradually been able to let her partner know that she is not responsible for either her happiness or her periods of boredom... Wanda has encouraged her partner to take up other hobbies while she plays ball hockey and goes bowling.

Wanda has had only one woman manager over her 18 year career in the CFPS. She is on several working groups and has developed a strong network of people with which she maintains a relationship. She has recently obtained her MBA through on-line learning and has been supported by several of the senior managers during her career. Although one manager did not want to give her an EX-01 job when she had won the competition, another senior manager offered her something else.

At this point in her career and although not unsympathetic to problems of a personal nature from staff, Wanda considers that her obligations are to the "taxpayers of

Canada”, and she is annoyed at employees who attempt to bend the rules and who don’t work as per their collective agreements. She feels that there is little done to correct poor employee behaviours, that this type of behaviour is “permeating the ranks” and that they are permitted to “get away with it”, which she considers unacceptable and so she attempts to deal with staff issues. Wanda believes that one of her strengths is that she has a good sense of humour, is a good judge of character, and knows what she can get away with regarding how she speaks to her managers and co-workers. She cautions that any woman who wants to be an EX needs to speak to “those who can make it happen” and to their partners or significant other since being an executive does necessitate long hours. At work she considers that she is very structured, organized and never has five minutes that is not spent working during the day. She tends to be “somewhat blunt” in what she wants. She feels that perhaps her weakness is that she is driven, and has high expectations of herself and others.

This chapter has outlined the methodology used in the present study. It began by describing the research participants and included their demographic profiles followed by the data collection and then data management and analysis processes; trustworthiness; limitations and delimitations; researcher as instrument; and has ended with a brief profile of each participant to provide insight into their unique life stories. I now turn to the first of three findings chapters, Chapter 4, which focuses on two important personal factors influencing participants’ careers.

CHAPTER 4

PERSONAL FACTORS INFLUENCING THE DEVELOPMENT AND ADVANCEMENT OF CAREERS: PART 1

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section focuses on personal career dispositions that influenced participants' careers and the second section outlines the influence of post-secondary education on their careers.

Personal Career Dispositions

Four career dispositions were found to be particularly important in influencing participants' careers: their desire for new challenges, their sense of responsibility for the job, their desire to make a difference, and their tenacity.

The Desire for New Challenges

There were a number of ways that participants demonstrated that they wanted, needed and sought new challenges. These characteristics, in turn, helped develop and shape their careers.

Much evidence points to the fact that participants in this study were bright individuals who were capable of taking on complex challenges. For example, nine of them have completed undergraduate degrees and five also went on to complete graduate degrees. Although Becky doesn't have university education, she has learned and now uses 15 different computerized financial systems to produce financial reports for senior management, and feels that "I am very good at learning very quickly and can grasp systems with little or no training" which may have helped with "furthering my career". Moreover, despite never having had any management training, Becky has 45 people reporting to her. Elizabeth, who completed an engineering degree, graduated "at the top

of [her] class”. At one point, Ann applied for a CFPS external national competitive process and “came first out of 350 people”. Laurie, whose background is in statistics and mathematics, enjoys “applied research and [statistical] modeling”, has always loved “number crunching...and could spend hours doing that ”. Megan always enjoys the projects that she is given and finds the work “very challenging” yet needs little “guidance or supervision”.

Participants also often made a point of saying how much they enjoyed learning. Elizabeth had a boss who “loved teaching me and I was a great sponge, I love to learn so it was a wonderful experience”. Similarly, Laurie “love[s] the process of learning – I love when you get to a new job; it’s painful [for the] first 6 months when you come in feeling like an idiot, [but] it seems to be what appeals to me (she laughs)”. She makes a point of listening very carefully when she first arrives in a new job; “that’s how I learn, that and reading”. Olivia also enjoys self-directed learning “I’m sort of a self learner; I read a lot about things that interest me and if there are courses that interest me [I take them]”. Ann shared that “every time I didn’t achieve what was expected, I took note. I paid attention...I would learn from the correction of my errors.” Boredom with some jobs seemed to be a common reason for participants to seek new challenges. Laurie said she did not plan her career, but instead “fell into her jobs” in the CFPS. When she saw a competitive process advertised, she would apply “because I was bored in my old job”. Olivia left her private sector job primarily because she had learned everything that she could in that job. Becky, for her part, sought more responsibility from her boss and always asked for more and different work. She recalled one example when she “had learned all I could in that job and I wanted to do something else”. Her boss wound up

giving her increasingly more complex projects involving overseas development missions, which she accomplished with great success. One of her largest projects, was to manage a huge portfolio where she learned how to do project management, finance and procurement. The job also required her to use French, which helped her maintain her French language profile. In a similar vein, Wanda was able to change jobs within her department in order to manage new files, which kept her from being bored. Moreover, by learning these different files, she would later be able to use that knowledge to write the hypothetical briefing notes to the Minister of her department for the EX-01 exam. Once she had managed all major files, she felt “it was really time to start looking for something else”. Wanda found another job and her Director General (DG) asked why she was leaving. She told him “I’m just bored; I’m looking for something different – a change”. He found her a position in a newly formed section of the department and also agreed to her request for French language training.

When it came to competing for EX level positions, however, participants in some cases were uncertain about whether or not they should attempt such a challenge. This ambivalence is not surprising given that only a few of them (Ann, Elizabeth and Megan) had had an opportunity to hold an Acting Director position prior to competing for EX-01 level. Moreover, sometimes their decision to compete seemed to be linked in part to their retirement plans. During my interviews with Grace, who at the time had not yet attained EX-01 level, she maintained: “I really don’t know if I want it [an EX position]; some days I do, some days I don’t but it’s getting to the point where I see retirement in 13 years – I’m quite happy to go out at this level and concentrate on my personal life”. Several months after my interviews with her, however, Grace told me that she had applied for and

had been successful in an EX-01 competition. Similar to Grace, Laurie “initially [did not have] an interest in being an EX...it was never a desire of mine”. However, after having moved up to an EX-minus-01 position in her 40’s, she had come to realize that she didn’t want to be an EX-minus-01 “forever”. She went on to say, “at that point, I had 10 years left [until retirement] and I thought I’ll try a couple of competitions and if they go somewhere okay, and if they don’t they don’t”. In Wanda’s case, she had a general career plan to one day reach the EX level. When she first considered applying for an executive job, she found herself “hemming and hawing” about whether or not she should do so: “I thought like that’s pretty brazen, I’m an EX-minus [02]...that’s a pretty big [jump]. She had also planned to only be in the EX category for “ten years or less” from retirement. She considered she would be an EX-minus-01 in five years, be an EX-01 for another five years, perhaps a Director General for five years more, and then “you’re out the door”. Wanda, nevertheless decided to apply for her first EX-01 competition for two reasons: she knew it would be awhile before there would be another competition advertised and thought she’d do it “just for the experience of the competition”. In fact, she wound up being successful and will now have “12 to 15 years” in the EX cadre.

Elizabeth, in contrast to everyone else, had “very high expectations of what I would accomplish in the work environment” even before she entered the CFPS. During her five years in private industry she had advanced very quickly to a senior engineer position and had become “Canada’s expert” on a particular technology delivering cross-country presentations and conducting in-depth studies. When asked informally, during this time, by a “veteran engineer” where she thought she might be in ten years, she responded, ““The Presidency [of the company], of course!’ ...lofty aspirations – but I was actually

quite serious when I said it...By all indications, [I was] well on my way to becoming the President” (laughs). Approximately three years after she entered the CFPS, she learned about the Career Assignment Program (CAP) during one of her internet searches and asked her boss to lobby senior management to fund her through this important leadership program. In spite of her boss telling her how incredibly difficult it is to get into the CAP program, she told him, “I think it can be done!” She was successful in passing all the exams and simulations for CAP, and in fact was the youngest in her class of 16 candidates. Since her time in the CFPS she has taken on very difficult and complex jobs. At the time of the interviews, Elizabeth had just recently changed jobs and was not completely enthused with the work she was being asked to do, in part because she was given administrative work with no chance to use her scientific analytical skills. “I love figuring out how to translate the strategic to the practical—that’s what I’m really good at”, she explained. Elizabeth is still an “unknown entity” in her new job and is uncertain whether or not she’ll eventually get the opportunity to do more stimulating work.

Participants seemed to always be open and ready to seize new job opportunities should they arise. For example, Wanda’s comments above demonstrate how, even though she didn’t feel ready for an EX position yet, but knowing that the process could take awhile and that the pool of successful candidates would be valid for eighteen months², she nevertheless made a point to submit her application. When Laurie applied for an EX competition, she didn’t get the job, yet she was successful enough to have impressed one of the board members and was offered a similar EX position. Laurie explained: “I must

² The name of each successful candidate in a competitive process may be placed in a “pool” that remains active for a specific period of time – in this case 18 months. During that time, a candidate could be offered another position if one becomes available.

have done reasonably well ‘cause I didn’t come first, I came second...the person that interviewed me...saw something there and he [thought he] would ‘take a chance’ ...he put me second on the list and...offer[ed] me a job...not the job that I applied to but something completely different”. As for Becky, when her sister (who also works in the CFPS) mentioned a competition ending that day, she made a point of applying, won the competition, and has been there ever since, being promoted three times. When Susan felt that she no longer was able to contribute because the department was changing direction, she happened to meet a Director who was setting up a new district office in another department. He introduced himself over coffee and asked if she wanted a change. She accepted his offer to deploy over to his department. At one point when Ann received a letter saying “I was one of the BEST people they EVER had working with them...I took that letter to the ADM [Assistant Deputy Minister] of policy and said, ‘can I work with you?’” This resulted in her getting a more challenging job.

Sense of Responsibility for the Job

Many participants described their strong commitment to getting the job done. Wanda, for example, said she’s been labelled “a workhorse, a machine, a person who gets things done”. Becky admitted to being very “demanding” as a manager. She offered an example; “I’m very big on quality of work. When I see one of my staff providing a document to the DM [Deputy Minister] that’s got a hand-written label on it that you can’t even read, it infuriates me because it’s not quality. It’s the Deputy Minister, HE is the head of the department”. Ann described her work as “a vocation for me...not a job” and described herself as “conscientious, [a] strong performer...dedicated to the office”. Her

intentions were always “to deserve my paycheque”. “Everything I had to give, I gave” she explained.

As managers, some participants noted that they felt they had a responsibility to elicit the best work possible from their staff. One strategy was to explain the “bigger picture” to their subordinates so they could understand how their contributions help meet organizational goals and objectives. When one of Becky’s employees, for example, came to her with what he thought was a good idea, she acknowledged its value but had to convey that “it’s not going to serve the purpose of what we’re trying to accomplish” since it was not part of the organization’s strategic direction. When Wanda was undergoing budget constraints, she had to allocate less funding for each project and needed workplans and costing from her staff as to what the priorities would be. They, however, found it difficult to be constrained and had never had to submit such plans previously. She would explain to them, “we are undergoing a budget alignment strategic review...I need to know what you’re doing, how much it’s going to cost...you’re in an unfunded program so you’re lucky to get this \$5,000”. When they insisted they needed to do certain activities, she would say to them “I don’t think you HAVE to – it’s a ‘nice to’ — and let’s sit down and make the decision on the value added of doing that”. Wanda indicated to her employees that the work plans were necessary in the event that she might have to go to the “DG [Director General] and argue for that piece of the pie of the budget.”

As suggested above, when participants became managers, an important responsibility was not only managing tasks for accomplishing goals, but also managing people. Participants varied greatly in the way they handled this issue. Of all the participants, Ann seemed to be least aware of how to manage people and recognized this

limitation in retrospect. She was totally committed to ‘the job’ and expected the same from everyone she worked with, which became a significant problem. She discovered that [managing staff is] “the hardest thing I’ve ever done”. Ann explained:

I am very task oriented...for me a personal call is something that one does on breaks or during lunch time. One does not even take calls or let people phone during the work day...I spent my [career taking] few breaks, working lunch at the desk. I found that people were in touch with their contracts, whereas I hardly knew anything about my contract. My view was JUST WORK! JUST WORK! Don’t spend so much time in the office visiting and commiserating; just come in and do your work. And if you want to chat, chat at lunchtime, chat on your breaks...[As an acting Director] “I expected people to be 100% available...work overtime, to be perfect. I just thought people were like me, nose to the grindstone. I always got into trouble when I encountered people who did not share my work ethic. It never crossed my mind that sending an e-mail at 11 o'clock at night to a subordinate was wrong. I was scolded for this...by my boss...[but] I was just doing what had been done to me over my career. Of course my staff and my boss told me that my management style was not effective.

Although Ann has reached EX-01 level, she now only works on projects, no longer manages staff, and feels that she doesn’t have “ANY stress”.

As an EX-01, Wanda holds regular staff meetings every month and a half and has a manager’s meeting once a week. She also might do a quick “walkaround” twice a week to see how people are doing but would like to find the time to do it every day. At the same time, Wanda demands a lot from her staff, so much so that her DG has referred to

her as being “a bit of a hard nose when it comes to disciplining and expectations” and feels that Wanda has to “cut people a bit of slack”. When it comes to managing people, she feels it is not her responsibility to solve her staff’s personal problems because “unfortunately, that’s not your responsibility – your responsibility is to the taxpayer of Canada to manage this organization in an effective and efficient way”. Wanda admitted that she can be quite “blunt” at times; and one of her staff actually accused her of being “very confrontational”. At the same time, Wanda has had a number of people who have said that they enjoyed working with her and others who wanted to work for her.

Prior to arriving at the CFPS, Megan had staff reporting to her and also later, when she spent four months replacing her boss as Acting Director, she experienced how difficult managing people could be: “when you have a bunch of people reporting to you, THAT’S when you get stressed!” Below Megan describes how she handled situations and how time-consuming and burdensome it was to manage people:

...You talk to them; you have to be polite and pleasant and interested; and I find most people if they don’t have people reporting to them aren’t aware of the kind of ‘burden’ they can be – because they don’t realize that there’s 14 other people coming with their problems...it’s not just the one... it can be VERY time-consuming...you can’t just say, ‘well, we’ll leave it for 4 months’...[she recalled how one employee was] a nice woman, I liked her as a person but every time she’d come into my office I thought ‘there goes two hours! (laughs)

In Susan’s case she has “a strong commitment to training and learning” for her staff’s career development. When new CFPS staff arrived in her department, she would

mentor them and discuss their future career plans. She provided them with pertinent training and indicated to me how they had “achiev[ed] beyond belief”.

When Olivia worked in a Minister’s office, at the EX-minus-01 level, she saw the need to create a new forum for the six (EX-minus-01) managers to share challenges and frustrations they all faced with managing staff. She suggested weekly meetings “without the boss [being] there” so everyone would feel comfortable raising issues and concerns. These meetings have helped her and her peers to not feel alone with their problems as well as helped them come up with solutions and act upon them; “when you talk about challenges, it’s sort of difficult after that, not to pay attention to your staff and...problems”, she explained.

Of all the participants, Becky’s description of her staff management approach seemed particularly noteworthy. She described herself as a demanding manager who expects her staff to “do a good job and [be] careful of what they do” and suspects that “a lot of people probably don’t like me... I’m very direct... a strong-minded person... and I know what I want”. Similar to Wanda, Becky, in her current job, said that she often walks around the office; however, she uses that opportunity mainly to build relations with her staff by asking, for example: “hi, how’s it going? What’s new?” Becky also makes it a point to thank her employees on a regular basis: “...at the end of the day I say thanks very much, have a nice evening , good-bye get outta here – go home!”. Moreover, she also has employees regularly coming to her to help them resolve personal or professional problems. She explained: “at least once a week I have somebody in my office crying... people’s home situations; problems with a co-worker, or they’ve been diagnosed with some kind of an illness – I have a box of Kleenex”. She believes they come to her in part

“because I’m honest and open...they can trust me and I won’t repeat the stuff unless it’s something...[that] has to be dealt with such as abuse of authority or that kind of thing...Where do they come? My door!” When it comes to very serious work concerns, Becky suspects her staff are well aware of the CFPS’s formal mechanisms available to support staff— for example, the Ombudsman, Director of Values and Ethics, Harassment Officer, Senior Officer of Internal Disclosure—yet “they come here to me before they go to those places”. When necessary, Becky refers staff to these types of supports. As shown above, she seems to have a good grasp of how to handle complex staff issues yet, surprisingly, she noted that she has had no training in these areas.

Becky attempted to treat her staff fairly and seemed to match her actions towards staff according to their needs. For example, Becky made a point of telling one employee, who felt that what she did was “‘never good enough’, that, in fact, she did a good job!” One of Becky’s staff members who presented an unusual challenge for her was a young woman who was intellectually challenged. Marie was “hard to manage...high maintenance...[and] sometimes she was at the mental capacity of a two year old”. At the same time, Becky seemed to feel a certain amount of compassion for her. She recalled how Marie “loved Hallowe’en...she used to come to work in an outfit every year on Hallowe’en”.

Marie would sometimes “do things that she shouldn’t do”. Becky recalled several notable incidents. One time she was upset that the staff had been invited to a special meeting and she hadn’t been invited. When the staff came back, they discovered that “she had taken all the chair legs off the chairs and all the seats were sitting on the floors of all the offices” (laughs). Marie’s job was delivering materials to various areas throughout the

department. Becky explained that “we couldn’t really monitor her all the time; she was supposed to be able to do all the work by herself”. She would sometimes disappear “for hours and hours on end and then I [Becky] would get a phone call from someone that she had been disruptive”. Becky recalled how one time Marie had heard from someone in accommodations that shelves were going to be installed in various areas of the department. Becky noted that people don’t always realize how careful one needs to be when communicating with a person with such disabilities. In this case, Marie thought she had to clear the rooms where supplies were kept immediately and took it upon herself to be proactive and remove everything. Becky got a telephone call at 3:20 that afternoon from the Minister’s office saying that her employee “had taken ALL the paper... ALL the documents...paperclips...garbage cans...recycle bins out of the rooms and [she] had stuck them all the way down the hallway ...in the Minister’s suite...and people couldn’t even get out of their offices”. By the time Becky had heard of it, “she had already dumped...everything out of the Deputy’s office too”. Becky told Marie that she had to clean it up; “Marie looked at her watch and [said] ‘nope, 3:30, gotta go catch my bus’, and she left”. Becky was obliged to have one of her other employees go in and take care of the situation – “he had to work till 9 o’clock that night to put everything back to where it was”.

On another occasion, over several days Marie went into the basement and decided to rearrange “hundreds and hundreds of publications that had been entered into a computerized system by grid number according to the palette they were on”. Over the course of a few days, she worked quietly in the back of the huge warehouse storage area and “with her little cart she... took it upon herself to...relocate all the publications to the

back of the warehouse...took everything off the skids...nobody even noticed that she was there”. Becky “got a phone call that Marie had done this so I had to deal with that” (laughs). Once when Marie was caught throwing several boxes of brand new ceramic tiles into a dumpster, she maintained that ““my boss, Becky, told me to come down here and do this!’...so I got a phone call and I had to deal with that (laughs)”.

Becky dealt with Marie’s inappropriate behaviour in different ways. Sometimes Becky called Marie’s father to discuss the situation; for more serious bad behaviour, Becky would suspend her for several days and contact her placement agency’s job coach. After the Ministerial office incident, Becky called Marie’s father, told him what had happened, and suspended Marie for a few days. Becky explained that she “always checked with the job coach first before I did anything drastic, just to make sure that [the coach] was on board and that she knew what was going on; and she always agreed with the way I handled the situation”. Becky recalled how on one occasion Marie was “in my office crying and...was really upset”. Becky had Marie speak to her job coach, who told her she was being sent home and suspended without pay. Marie “yelled at her and said, ‘I’m not going home!’” Becky proceeded to tell her she WAS GOING HOME even if she had to drive her there herself.

Becky seemed to take these incidents in stride and, in fact, went to great lengths to help Marie in other ways (see later discussion in this chapter). Furthermore, she “subsequently hired two more people with learning disabilities, who worked out fine”.

Elizabeth, to some extent, seemed to put people first and tasks second. She loves her little “sticky note flip out thing” that says “people make the difference” which she has kept for seventeen years. Elizabeth laughingly referred to herself as a “hug leader” of

sorts, a quality she attributes to having acquired from a CFPS superior who “had a great influence” on her and who used to sometimes “hug” her employees.

Elizabeth feels that she developed “good people skills” in addition to “good writing skills and good ability to adapt to almost anything; I [am] a diverse engineer”. In one of her past CFPS positions the part she liked best about the job was “the people aspect; I liked very much bringing people together to work on one thing”. Although her boss at the time was very good at being a visionary, he “was less good at managing his staff [and] managing the interactions with technologists”. Since she really liked working with people her boss would “send me to negotiate and I loved that – I loved pulling the people together”.

Elizabeth recognizes that everyone has faults and strengths and that collectively the mix of the two can work together to make a “whole”. She believes that her strength lies in making people comfortable with the fact that she is not “some high and mighty know everything person”. She seeks to create a supportive office environment that recognizes weaknesses but seeks to improve them. She explained, “We’re not going to knock each other for our weaknesses; we’re going to acknowledge them, see if we can work...to improve them...we’re all just people right? We all have weaknesses...None of us have fatal flaws”.

After Elizabeth left one of her more recent jobs in the executive level, she was sad to hear that “what we [Directors and Directors General] built as a fair degree of organization[al] cohesion, vision and culture has been dismantled”. Elizabeth would have liked to bring some of her former staff with her but is not in a position to do so. However, she still maintains a developmental relationship with some of them, and people still

contact her. She explained: “so I struggle a little bit with a feeling that I’ve abandoned the people that I staffed”.

Desire to Make a Difference

Another important career disposition was that participants valued making a difference to others, whether it was the Minister they served, the Canadian public, or even an employee. At one point in her career, Becky went so far as to arrange a one-on-one meeting with the Minister in order to understand his vision for a project, a strategy that is quite unusual for someone at her level. After her 45-minute meeting with him, she was able to intervene on his behalf to help expedite a project he had been waiting on for three months. Becky explained that sometimes the support staff fail to understand the big picture, and the implications of what it means to the department when people don’t provide a good service or good quality product.

Cate spoke with considerable pride about how she believed that she made a significant contribution: “I have shaped the map of Canada...I worked on the project of creating Nunavut; I made a difference at the community level in people’s lives...I spent five years in communities negotiating to get them money for community justice initiatives.” Wanda explained how she left one job doing office accommodations because finding space for people didn’t provide her with “a real sense of accomplishment...I didn’t feel that I was doing something to serve the public; your clients are different, you’re not dealing with the public anymore. It just didn’t have the same ‘pizzaz.’” She returned to law enforcement where she felt she was able to “enforce laws” and she felt that she was “affecting people’s lives” and protecting them.

Elizabeth, for her part, was asked at one point in her career to join a newly formed team consisting of eleven of the “best senior policy people from across government” and six or seven employees, headed by an ADM (Assistant Deputy Minister) specifically for that initiative. She described how this team undertook a high-level global scientific initiative which involved consulting across Canada and believed this to be, in her eyes “an amazing experience”. She described her role: “none of them had science and technology background and they needed someone who understood policy work in the scientific and technology section, so that’s when I was picked”. Elizabeth, described her realistic views that although she “can’t change the world”, she can still “make a little ongoing difference”.

Becky’s supervisory work with the intellectually challenged conveys her desire to make a difference. She is the only manager in her department who has taken on such a challenge. Her work with Marie, the disabled woman mentioned earlier, went well beyond what one would typically expect of a manager. She helped Marie’s parents to send her to summer camp to improve her social skills. When Marie’s father died, Becky went to the funeral. Following the loss of her father, Marie became very depressed and was no longer able to work. Becky arranged for a medical retirement from the CFPS and also helped the family find a group home for Marie, where she is very happy. Becky’s contribution for Marie’s well-being was considered so impressive by the organization supporting work placements for intellectually challenged individuals that it presented Becky with a prestigious award.

Although participants wanted to make a contribution to the Canadian population they served, they also learned that change happens very slowly and in small amounts

within the CFPS due to bureaucratic processes and the fact that public servants ultimately answer to political masters (i.e., Ministers who head federal government departments).

When Susan first entered the CFPS she “saw how many issues there still were about administration around Aboriginal affairs”. She accepted the job offered to her in the North and said: “so that was my premise that if I was going to try to effect any changes it would be one thing”. Susan believes that she weighs her career as a public servant...on making a difference and whether she is “doing something for citizens.” She explained her views:

And I don't think that [with our] federal structure...I've been able to achieve anything – the only codicil to that would be this summer when I transferred back to my former department...and was able to get that Memoranda to Cabinet...[to] secure the funding to finally negotiate [a huge social justice issue]...I felt like wow – over the past 9 years that that month and a half burst was probably the most that I've probably been able to achieve...[I] worked very hard; [it] took years 9 years; [I was] thrilled to accomplish that.

Susan has been frustrated by the amount of time it takes to accomplish so little in the CFPS and said that “she may not be a particularly good civil servant” because she is far too “entrepreneurial”. She went so far as to take a one-year leave of absence to reflect upon what else she could do, and was thinking of perhaps becoming a consultant because she felt it was so hard to effect change. She described why she felt that way: “Here, in Ottawa, [I don't] appreciate the rigid hierarchy that doesn't, for the most part, let you get things done”.

Laurie, a policy person, described how the CFPS has limited ability to effect change: “I learned a lot...about the role of Central Agencies particularly...where equity issues were concerned...I learned how DIFFICULT it is to actually make things change because [of] how decisions are made...it’s not necessarily about...the numbers right?” Although she didn’t have the numbers for the various equity groups in front of her at the time, she mentioned, “Aboriginal Peoples, Persons with Disabilities and Visible Minority people” and explained:

the numbers are right there in front of you...we have studied these to death...to determine what the barriers are...we KNOW what they are, yet we cannot make any change - not because we don’t know what to do, but because we don’t have the willpower at a very senior level... no leadership...no political will...it takes time to do that. You’ve got to change the way people look upon themselves and look at others...those things take a long time. Governments operate within a 6-month vantage or a 3-month; if you’re lucky, a year; so there’s no political will to make changes...it takes too long.

Tenacity

The final important career disposition demonstrated through participants’ stories was tenacity. For example, as mentioned earlier, Susan spent nine years working to secure extensive funding to support the negotiation of a very important social issue; and Grace spent eleven years studying part-time to complete her formal education while working full time (See Formal Education).

Wanda described herself as being “very task oriented” and explained how she doesn’t stop working if she is in the middle of it “and if the middle of it happens to be at

4 or 4:30 when normally I should be going home after coming in at 7:30, I'll just keep on mucking on through and it might be 6:00 or later before I finish". As noted earlier, she has been labelled "a workhorse, a machine, a person who gets things done". Laurie recalled the time when determination got her through a difficult career move. When she arrived as a new EX-01 at her new department, it was facing a re-organization and she had lost her one ally who had been sent elsewhere. She described how "people were moved into different areas...I could have very easily sunk and it would have sunk my career forever; however, I was determined, I did the best I could". She had very little staff and one person thought "that he could walk over me and he revolted...he took 2 weeks off when he knew very well that we needed him...complained about me behind my back...did anything that he possibly could to get me out". Laurie doesn't know whether or not his intent was to 'get her out' but she persevered and did not intend to let this happen. She said "I wasn't going anywhere – I told him that".

At the start of Elizabeth's first job in the CFPS she found a pivotal mathematical error in a document just before it was to have gone to Parliament to be submitted through a Bill. She explained how she repeatedly tried to bring this critical error to her supervisor's attention:

I went to my boss and said, "you know there's a mistake here in this calculation" and he said, "Oh, you're so nice sweetie to have been checking that, but you know I'm sure it's fine, go back to your desk, go do that other thing I asked you" (laughs). I went back to my desk, I redid the calculations for like the fifth time 'cause I had already checked them about three times before I had gone in to talk to him....For two weeks he sent me back...every day I'd go to him and say "I've

checked this – this is straight math – there is no interpretation here.” When he finally, finally sat down long enough for me to show him how this didn’t work out, he was just like “Oh, My God! We have to fix this”!

So despite Elizabeth being “belittled” for telling her boss there was an error, her doggedness in insisting that this needed to be fixed proved fruitful. Unbeknownst to her, her controlled ‘ranting’ to get the error noticed by her immediate boss had gotten her noticed by senior management:

It took two weeks for him to finally listen to me for me to tell him “This is WRONG! IT HAS TO BE FIXED!” I was almost yelling at him by the end of two weeks to get him to listen....Down the hall was the Director’s office...and this Director apparently had heard that there was this fiery young engineer (laughs) that had been hired who was kind of putting this manager [in his place].

Elizabeth’s determination in not backing down helped set in motion a number of things that helped shape her career. It helped the CFPS ‘save face’ since she had stopped a huge error prior to it being submitted to be passed in a Bill in Parliament; she was noticed as someone with strength of conviction; she was subsequently invited to accompany the Director out to industry in order to renegotiate the clauses that were problematic; and several years later this same Director agreed to lobby his boss for Elizabeth to get departmental funding for the very expensive Career Assignment Program (CAP) offered by the CFPS.

On another occasion Elizabeth demonstrated her ability to stick with a difficult situation. When she needed supervisory experience for her CAP completion and she was unable to find anyone in Ottawa to give it to her, she reluctantly agreed to take a one-year

assignment where she needed to travel to a city a considerable distance from Ottawa for a few days each week, despite having three young children at home. She endured doing this demanding routine for six months (see *Lives in Context* for more details).

For Cate, tenacity was demonstrated through a 20-year struggle to be recognized in the CFPS for her skills and abilities. She recalled how many years ago, she was not recognized for her writing skills even though she had a graduate degree in journalism. She feels she has been fighting ever since to “prove that I can do things and I have to admit that it has given me an ‘attitude’”. She says she has become “very defensive and I have a chip on my shoulder that goes away and comes back because right from day one I have been fighting to prove myself”.

Ann’s ability to be tenacious highlights how this disposition may also have ‘a dark side’ leading to years of misery, unhealthy stress, and even serious physical illness. Ann explained how she worked in a job in which she spent twelve “miserable” years, realizing in retrospect that she had been a “misfit” the entire time. She admitted that “It took me YEARS to recover from working in the policy area”. She believes she has learned the lesson that “If you're not happy where you are, YOU should move. Move on, don't wait. Don't think it's going to get better, just move on... That is my most important lesson to pass on”. She described how she had seen other people arrive in their jobs, and when they either didn’t like the work or didn’t get along with their bosses, they found other positions. She realizes now that she was too tenacious, saying, “perhaps tenacity has a downside. What was the point of holding on so tightly to something that was clearly wrong for me?” It should be noted, however, that her tenacity was in part linked to her fear of losing her job during a downsizing era when she was also a single mom with a

young child. As she explained, “[this] was partly why I was so tenacious. I felt I had no other choice”. Ann started feeling unwell in 2006, but instead of cutting back on hours, she did the opposite: “All of a sudden I couldn't remember people's names, I couldn't remember my work. I couldn't get my work done so instead of working till 7 at night I'd work till midnight”. Her health deteriorated to the point that she asked to return to her former position, and the next day she landed in the hospital. She explained:

For many months I couldn't breathe at work... I could hardly walk from the parking lot up the stairs to work; and I was gaining so much weight my suits were bursting open and I couldn't keep them closed. The day after I asked to return to my former position I was admitted to the hospital. I had numerous massive pulmonary emboli in my lungs...I almost died.

While in the hospital she had a chance to reflect on the mistake she had made in sticking to a job for which she was clearly not suited, for the sake of security. At the same time, if she were to die, at least her son would be “financially well cared for...and [have the] freedom to choose a good job...[to] go somewhere where you are ‘a fit’”.

In sum, four personal career dispositions were found to be very important factors in shaping the careers of the women, namely, their desire for new challenges, their sense of responsibility for the job, their desire to make a difference through the work they do, and their tenacity. I turn now to another very important personal factor influencing their careers: the role of formal post-secondary education.

Formal Education

Overview of Participant Educational Profiles

A very brief overview of participants' formal education is provided below to position their educational status prior to arrival in, and during their work lives in the CFPS. Participants are listed according to their current levels (EX-01s and above and EX-minus-01s) and the amount of education they have acquired.

Elizabeth, who had an undergraduate degree in Chemical Engineering with a management option that included extensive cooperative education experience, began in the CFPS as an engineer. Grace, who acquired EX-01 status a short time after my interviews with her, entered the CFPS with a secretarial certificate, and while working full-time she completed a Police Science Certificate Program. She then spent nine years completing her undergraduate law degree, again while working. Ann, who is an EX-01, entered the CFPS with a library technician program from a local college and an undergraduate degree in English literature. Wanda began working towards a degree in Marine Biology and, persuaded by her parents to pursue another degree due to lack of jobs in that field, she instead completed a Bachelor of Commerce degree. Later, while working full-time in the CFPS she completed an MBA through an accredited on-line distance education program. She chose this delivery method because she didn't "like being tied to a classroom" preferring instead to "learn at [her] own pace". Following high school, Laurie lived at home and worked three jobs in order to complete her undergraduate degree in Mathematics. At one point during her university years she worked for the CFPS for two summers. She continued working towards her graduate

degree in Mathematics and Statistics and was then student-bridged into a permanent ES (economics and statistics) position.

Of those at the EX-minus-01 levels, Cate followed up her undergraduate degree in Political Science with a Masters degree in Journalism, but realized while still in that program that she “didn’t have what it takes to be a working journalist”. She then went on to complete a second Masters degree in Political Science. Megan, prior to joining the CFPS, completed an undergraduate diploma in physiotherapy which was accepted as a pre-requisite for entry into a Masters program in Health Administration. She completed the Masters degree while on self-paid maternity leave from private industry. Susan’s father died when she was 16 years old and she said, “I really didn’t feel or think that I would get to university”. After working for a few years, Susan undertook her undergraduate degree in Canadian history full-time while working for the provincial public service. She completed her Masters full-time in Canadian History with Specialization in Canadian Studies while also working full-time at the same university, sometimes taking courses during her lunch hours. Susan was 8 months into a PhD program when she was offered and subsequently accepted an indeterminate (permanent) position in the CFPS in a remote region. She continued in the program for about a year and then dropped out. At the time of the interviews she was thinking of perhaps resuming her PhD. Olivia completed a college diploma in interior design and, later, while working in the CFPS, she obtained a certificate in the Management Development Program for Women from an accredited university.

Although Becky had hoped to “go to university to become either a geologist or archaeologist”, she never pursued post-secondary education. Becky attributes this to a

number of factors: She had a father who considered education more important for his son and who died when she was 18; and her mother suffered greatly from mental and other illnesses. Her mother sold “the family home” and moved far from the city after Becky’s father died. Becky, who was working full-time in the CFPS then needed to support herself, since she did not want to relocate. She “wasn’t going to quit [her] government job to go to university – it just wasn’t doable”.

Value of Undergraduate Education

A couple of women made a point of noting that they knew of individuals who had advanced to the EX-minus-01 and even EX-01 levels without having earned an undergraduate degree. And of course Becky and Olivia, with their EX-minus-01 status, were a case in point. Cate, however, believes that for higher level management positions, “people who could get through and make it into senior management without even a university degree are probably all retired by now”. In fact, the vast majority of the participants in the present study (8 out of 10) had at least undergraduate degrees. Wanda, for instance describes how her undergraduate degree enabled her, among others, to apply for and enter into her first CFPS job. She said, “so all of us who were hired needed some level of post-secondary education so I think everybody sort of had that same skillset”.

Susan believes that those without post-secondary education “can’t compete, they can’t write, they can’t analyze, they don’t have the ability to communicate perhaps as well as what you are trained to do when you have post-secondary education”. For her part, Becky believed that “any executive jobs [in the CFPS] are not in my reach because 99% need University Degree”. She also maintains that any career development programs in the CFPS are unavailable to her: “They have CAP [Career Assignment Program], they

have AEXDP [Accelerated EX Development Program], they have Executive Interchange, they have MTP [Management Trainee Program] for EX-minus-01, but you have to have a degree or be a college graduate”.

An undergraduate degree in a specialized field proved to be very valuable to several participants in their CFPS careers. For instance, Elizabeth describes how her undergraduate engineering degree, together with her five years of experience in the private sector, helped her get her first job in the CFPS, one that gave her higher salary and position but little satisfaction:

[We were] three engineers [two males and Elizabeth]...hired from the private sector...– at a good level...as an ENG-04. From the start...I came in a couple of steps above the entry engineer level and I had 5 years experience at that point so that was good – got a big salary increase when I came in the door so I was quite impressed with that, [although my boss had] touted to all of us the very interesting aspects...of the one program...but when I showed up on the first day I found out I was the very junior one of the three of us and I was given the smallest program...it was boring!

A few years later into her CFPS career Elizabeth’s undergraduate degree enabled her to land another job where she could use her scientific expertise. Notably, she described it as being “almost magical” and couldn’t “believe I am doing a job...where I am being PAID TO HAVE IDEAS! [emphasis in original]”. She explained further:

I got to go as this science, technology, engineer person, to learn, from what I can figure was the best across the government... we had done a big consultative process

across Canada with 140 experts in all kinds of specialty fields...I was on a high ...
I was...a source for ideas... and you were valued...it was really exciting!

Grace obtained specialist education at various times throughout her CFPS career, whenever she believed that further specialization was necessary to advance. For example, when she worked in a security position she decided to complete a two-year Police Science Certificate at a local college. “There were...courses in criminal code, law and in forensics... different things that I thought I should be aware of if that’s the career choice that I wanted to follow,” she explained. Later on in another position, surrounded by CFPS colleagues and clients who worked in legal fields, she “wanted more”, and through moral and financial support from her department she completed an undergraduate law degree over a nine year span.

Not having the necessary specialized degree could be problematic. Prior to Elizabeth entering into an EX-01 position, while acting in a managerial position that she really enjoyed, she discovered that she “couldn’t even apply” for the position permanently nor would she have “advanced one iota from there” because she didn’t hold a specialist degree.

Value of a Graduate Degree

According to many of the participants, a graduate degree was a key factor in entering and advancing within the CFPS. Susan, for instance, who had a graduate degree in Canadian history, with a focus on Aboriginal land claims and treaty rights, entered the CFPS at an EX-minus-01 level. Moreover, she felt that this background “helped me tremendously” with her work in several CFPS departments on Aboriginal issues in Northern communities and elsewhere.

Because Laurie specialized in mathematics and statistics at the graduate level, she was thrilled to be able to use her advanced specialized skill from the start of her CFPS career:

I was doing modeling – I was a statistician; that was my training. So I spent hours sitting on the 18th floor with a lovely view crunching numbers ...I remember it was the greatest job...having fun at what I was doing...the people I was working with and for were very good and at the time...I was going to school [doing my Masters]...I remember my boss was okay with that ... so it was a great time and that's how I ended up in the public service.

Grace notes that for some positions in the CFPS, graduate degrees are necessary. Although she feels that an undergraduate degree is enough for her at this point in time, and she does not want to compromise her family life for a further degree, she recognizes that "...there are a few positions right now, such as PCO [Privy Council Office] , other Central Agencies, they want Masters, and it will be right up front...there are others where they're satisfied with a Bachelors".

Cate made the point that over the years, advanced post-secondary education has become increasingly necessary for career advancement to higher levels. In the 1980's for example, she was encouraged by a human resource specialist to "downplay" her masters degrees yet today she finds herself "working with people who now have PhDs". She elaborates:

...Today it's VERY important!...people who could get through and make it into senior management without even a university degree are probably all retired by now. Now you've got people who have gotten away with Bachelors who are in

senior management, but NOW you need a Masters to get an ES-06 [EX-minus-01] for crying out loud...if you're in the policy area, you've got to have a Masters at least.

In her current job, Cate, who has Masters degrees in Journalism and Political Science, says she feels valued and describes how she believes that she is “being treated as if I’m more competent [because she is] amongst “PhD academics who are able to write pure policy”. Cate is able to “help them move it to the next level” when they ask ‘what do we do with them?’ I’m bridging that gap... [They work on the] assumption you wouldn’t be here if you weren’t the best. ...That’s a wonderful feeling!”

Wanda had much to say and was unequivocal about the impact of her MBA on her career. “Did it affect me? Absolutely!” although she made a point of stressing that she did it for “personal enrichment...not for career advancement” and felt strongly that personal development should be one’s primary motivation for pursuing an advanced degree. Wanda went on to explain the many ways she has benefitted from obtaining this graduate degree. For example, her program made it possible to interact with executives from other areas such as the military, GM and Gillette:

I learned an awful lot...it was just amazing, you’re interacting with these people and just finding out like what they do, how they do it – so your business acumen that you get is certainly a higher level than you would get in a B.Comm. so I can certainly see a difference, having gone for an MBA”.

This degree has also made “a big difference” in how Wanda approaches dealing with sensitive human resource issues. “I’m much more equipped now having gone through two years of an MBA program...about dealing with difficult people”.

Wanda further describes being “less afraid” and of having more confidence in dealing with senior management. She reports:

...Prior to my MBA, I never would have applied...I hemmed and hawed on applying for the EX ...because, I thought that’s pretty brazen, I’m in an ...EX minus [-02]...that’s a pretty big jump so I think it [the MBA] built a little bit of confidence in me... I’m not afraid... if somebody comes to you and says, “we have to go to a meeting with the Deputy”!, it no longer bothers me – pre MBA [it] would have...[I would have been] just a little nervous in being with somebody ...[my] ability to present appearance and... operate at that level, I think. It was just a confidence-building thing...

Finally, Wanda considers she has gone “up a notch” in her ability to write the ever important briefing note (see list of terms in Appendix A). She recalls “looking back at some of the briefing notes that I had written pre-MBA and post-MBA...the difference is just phenomenal...the simplistic language that you use with the B.Comm versus the language that you use with an MBA is quite different; it’s like looking at the difference between night and day”.

In a similar vein, Ann explains how *lack* of a graduate degree can negatively impact one’s work circumstances. She worked in a policy area for twelve years, among individuals who had masters or doctorates and she herself had a “measly [undergraduate] degree in English literature”. She explains the incredible personal challenges she faced in that circumstance:

...I went into the policy group...it was the hardest 12 years of my life because I had a measly degree in English literature. I noticed that the people recruited into the

policy group were often multi-lingual, [with] masters or doctorates...politically astute people, often people who had grown up in political families, and boy did I struggle!...I was inspired to do my best, but again I didn't HAVE THE BACKGROUND – I just couldn't compete with people who had studied history for 4 years and then had studied political science for 2 years...I was a very technical writer, not conscientious about adjectives and adverbs and things like that...in the policy group, EVERYTHING, every comma, every breath, every way you hold your body, every single thing counts along with being very politically astute and very informed and very sophisticated.

Individual bosses may, at times, be influential in determining the value of an employee's graduate degree. In Megan's case she used her boss's misunderstanding of her degree to her advantage. When she was interviewed for her first job in the CFPS she was amused at being hired for a position in environment due to her Masters degree in Health Administration. "He thought because my background was health [that] health and environment were very similar". When I asked if she thought the fields were linked, she broke into laughter and said, "NO! – but that was his logic and I thought, well, if you think so!" One of Cate's bosses appears to have forgotten that Cate had a Masters in Journalism as well as in Political Science. Her director planned to contract out the writing of results of a large government survey. When Cate reminded her Director of her ability to do this task due to her educational background in journalism, her boss replied, "well I hired you to do statistics; I [didn't] know that you can write". Wanda made the point that "[for] some people around [my] department [my MBA] makes a difference, and for others it really falls flat". For example, her former Director who had an undergraduate

degree, wasn't a "proponent of education" and when they ran competitions he didn't "see why we're looking for people with degrees". Yet when her former Director General learned that she had finished her MBA he was delighted and, in fact, "he had already built my career path, I think".

Elizabeth, who during the course of our interviews had risen to the EX-02 level, believes that a Masters or PhD is not necessary for every executive. She herself maintains that she has learned to be an executive by working "in a diversity of work environments with diverse personalities and issues and people". Elizabeth doesn't think she would have benefitted much from an academic environment and believes that she has learned a "HUGE amount from all of the different kinds of work experiences that I've gotten". At the same time, her recent appointment to her current job was "controversial" because "the culture here is such [and] I lack a formal research background" and she feels that she has no "credibility". She is "disappointed" that they see her only as a "generic administrator type" rather than as someone who can also "make the link with the science". Moreover, when asked if having a PhD would make a difference, she exclaimed, "Oh God! Yes! Oh yes! If I had a PhD – I don't think it would matter in what – I would have had more interactions already with the scientific directors and their organizations".

In sum, the formal education of the participants was a major personal factor shaping their careers within the CFPS. The section has provided an overview of the participants' educational profiles and has also considered the value of both undergraduate education and graduate education for their careers. I turn now to Chapter 5, which

considers how the tension between participants' work and non-work lives have influenced their career development and advancement.

CHAPTER 5

PERSONAL FACTORS INFLUENCING THE DEVELOPMENT AND ADVANCEMENT OF CAREERS: PART 2

This chapter foregrounds the third personal factor influencing the development and advancement of participants' careers, namely the relationship between their work and their lives beyond the workplace.

Lives in Context

Three major themes emerged that demonstrated clear interconnections between how participants' careers were influenced by their work and non-work lives. These were: the impact of time-related factors, the effect of children, and the role of partners.

Impact of Long Hours on Personal Lives

Time pressure was a predominant theme in relation to balancing work and other aspects of life. The majority of participants were expected to work long hours once they reached the EX-minus-01 and even more so after entering the EX-01 levels. This organizational norm of working long hours was such a pervasive phenomenon during this period that one could even consider it a kind of 'cultural tenet' in the CFPS; hence I have also included this theme further when foregrounding organizational factors in Chapter 6. In this chapter I present findings regarding the impact of the culture of long hours on the personal lives of the participants.

A few participants tacitly shared that working tended to cut into personal time and this manifested itself in different ways. Laurie, who raised two children prior to being in the executive cadre, says, "I think when I was at home I was able to do what I needed to do at home and when I was at work I was able to do what I needed to do at work, and I think everybody got the best part of me (laughs) so they shouldn't complain".

Whereas EX's receive performance pay and are not compensated for overtime, EX-minus-01s normally fall under a collective agreement which delineates the terms and conditions of overtime compensation. The EX-minus-01 participants were covered under a collective agreement for their groups and levels regarding travel time. In practice, however, there appeared to be a fair amount of discretion on the part of managers regarding expectations and compensation. Susan's particular case demonstrates the ambiguity surrounding the overtime issue. For example:

As a PM-06 [EX-minus-01] you already work weekends...and that's explained to you...even though you've got a collective agreement, you're management so be prepared to put in the hours – and I do. You know you have to travel on weekends and it's all considered, so don't whine about it.

However, Susan's boss was willing to cooperate with her regarding flexibility in receiving compensatory time. She negotiated taking days off to compensate for extensive overtime; and she explained that up North "we always had that kind of flexibility...we were never very formal, and especially [when] we were working 14-15 hour days...and I appreciate that kind of flexibility rather than the rigid clocking in". On the other hand, Cate's director "came from a department with the attitude that the higher you go, the more free overtime you give to the system". Cate explained how another of her managers "would constantly come into my office just before I was ready to leave...he wouldn't let me go and I was late for everything. I missed doctor's appointments; I missed appointments to take my cat to the vet".

In some instances, overtime was not seen as a problem, however. One notable example was when Elizabeth was working as a CFPS engineer and held a job that was so

incredibly appealing to her that regular overtime became a non-issue in spite of having three young children. She explained:

[When] I think back on it, I think it was almost magical...I was in a fun environment that was dynamic... it was really exciting...pretty easy to slip into longer hours...we DID work late on a regular basis but we always had wine after 5 o'clock...it was a wonderful thing... I used to say to [my husband] "it's ALMOST dangerous" because it was such a DRUG, actually, to work there – I was enjoying it so much...I was on a HIGH – I had a very young baby at home and two other kids, the oldest was 5, 3 and an 8-month old baby at this point so lots of challenges to juggle all the demands at home and lots of work...[it was] fairly regularly, one night a week. I didn't care at all because it was dynamic and challenging and enriching.

Because participants were aware that entering the EX level meant even longer hours, they reflected on this point. For example, in describing how she was considering applying for an EX position, Wanda discussed it with her partner: "I talked to her about it, explaining the fact that EX's tend to work longer hours". Now that Wanda is an EX-01 her partner is rather ambivalent about it and she explains, through her partner's words, the type of hours she is now working: "Is this going to be the norm, leaving at 6:00 or 6:30 in the morning...not going to get home until 7 o'clock?" In fact, a 10-12 hour workday has become the norm for her.

Olivia, at age 49, who is in a Minister's office and who already works long hours, believes that the higher you go the longer the hours required. She has observed time

schedules of senior management and is quite uncertain about striving for EX positions at this point in her life. She explains:

Yes, I would like to be an EX-01. I don't have an aspiration to be more than that...I don't find it a very balanced kind of life and I don't want that. I have other interests that are important to me...I mean for me that's not a life, I don't want that at ALL! Like no way, no way, no money is going to get me there, *qui va m'attirer* (that would entice me)...in this department, I observe that people work long hours; it's not unusual.

In a similar vein, Megan, who is now 62 and who has acted at the EX-01 level on several occasions, spoke of the time-related trade-offs in having higher level positions:

[I would have] liked to achieve a higher level in management" but ...having a balanced life is also important...there are real trade-offs...the trade-offs would be that the higher level you go the more work you have to do and the more hours you would have to put in...but...at this point...I mean years ago I would have been committed to doing it...I'm not sure I am anymore. I went to a higher level position and I was there till 7 or 8 o'clock every day. If it's the odd time, I'm fine but I don't want to do it on a daily basis.

Laurie, now an EX-01, works long hours but has developed a strategy of arriving later to compensate for late departures from work:

...yeah, I do work really long hours [but] I now get into the office between 9:00 and 9:30 because I figure if I have to stay late, I'm not coming in early, and I will leave on average at about between 7:00 and 7:30. So those can be considered pretty

long hours. And I do take work home and on the weekend, I do a couple of hours here and there.

Now that Wanda is an EX-01, she travels occasionally which creates a backlog of work when she returns to the office. She explains: “like last week we were in Montreal all week for meetings and, I mean, when I came back there were no ifs, ands or buts, there were so many pressing things that I had to come in on Saturday”.

At one point Elizabeth was in need of supervisory experience to fulfill one of her CAP requirements, she reluctantly agreed to travel to another city once a week for a year to supervise a team there. She described her hectic weekly travel routine:

I would leave ...really late Sunday night: I had one place that I lived and literally had a bag, at that hotel so I would show up pick up my bag, spend the day there, drop my bag off the next morning then...hop back onto the plane at the end of the day [and come back]. [Sometimes I would] catch the first plane at 5:30 a.m., Monday, rent a car, drive to the office [which] was about 20 minutes from the airport... and come back [the same day]. Luckily this was before 9/11, September 11th because I had timed it to the MINUTE (laughs) how to get through airport security, what time to leave the office; and I survived this for 6 months – for 6 months I did this!...I decided I couldn't handle it anymore because I was travelling all the time.

Wanda finds it difficult at times to make time for personal activities. When asked how long she thinks she can continue to work 10-hour days, she responds, “probably indefinitely, as long as I can get to the gym right? But what I'm finding now is even that time has disappeared. I mean I haven't had a lunch break or been to the gym in weeks”.

Wanda captures her dilemma between her desire to protect her personal life and her sense of responsibility towards work when she says, “I refuse to work weekends...I shouldn’t say that; I worked last weekend!”

Grace, who as EX-minus-01, worked long hours prior to advancing to EX-01. She was concerned that she would have to devote even longer hours if she were to become an EX. She values her leisure time and explained:

I love my personal life which is much more important to me now than let’s say 15 years ago, so I definitely strive now to do the work and have work/life balance – it’s got to be there and I won’t give my family life up – not now.

She and her husband like to travel and “to always be there for the job – there are some posters out there now, if you look at the EX level, it says, ‘must be available 24/7’, they’re starting to play with that now.”

Today’s electronic technologies have further blurred work and personal life, particularly for those individuals who deal with high profile issues such as media requests, policy urgencies, housecards (i.e., briefings to help the Minister respond to questions from cabinet), and so on. It was not unusual for some individuals to receive, and need to respond immediately to, e-mails and urgent telephone calls after hours and on weekends (see also chapter 6).

Another important aspect of time was the need for flexibility in order to deal with non-work responsibilities. On a positive note, in recent years, Elizabeth feels that her CFPS job does allow her some flexibility “in terms of taking time off for appointments and going to schools, and meetings or arriving late or leaving early for school events and

things like that”. When her husband was offered a job in another city, this belief helped them decide that he would forgo this “lucrative transfer” and stay in Ottawa.

When Elizabeth worked out in the suburbs, with three young children at home, she described just how important flexibility is:

...huge! huge! it was very important for me to be home early in the evenings, supper was a ridiculously busy time feeding two little ones at that time”...I was given the flexibility...to work really early in the day and to leave really early in the day so I missed most of the traffic...I would leave work at 3:30, 4:00 and be home by 4:30, 5:00.

However, the ability to have flexibility came at a cost since some of her bosses perceived that leaving early was a sign of lack of ambition (see also Chapter 6). Later when Elizabeth needed to find herself a position in policy work for one of her CAP assignments, the issue of flexibility became even more problematic. She approached a Director for a job and described how she “literally had a conversation with [the Director] in the hallway and the elevator, because she was so busy and I realized afterwards what that meant”. The Director at first said, “oh yes, absolutely! We need all the help we can”. Elizabeth then explained her need for flexibility to the Director:

“...[That’s] great but the one thing is I have three kids and one of them is going to be in the daycare here in the building and I have to leave at 4:00 every day.” She looked at me like I had four eyes! She said, “NO! Policy doesn’t work like that...where are you coming from? Well, maybe things were difference there but nobody works [only] till 4:00 here”. So I said, “Well, if I really push it I can do it till 4:30”, and she said, “fine you can come and work for me until 4:30”. I said,

“like you’re fine? I have to pick up my son at the daycare downstairs and I HAVE to have that flexibility”, and she said, “yes”.

This tension foreshadowed the disastrous relationship that evolved between the two of them. Elizabeth explained:

Sure enough I came to work for her and it was hell! ...after her having promised I could work until 4:30, she would constantly schedule meetings at 5:00 and then complain the next day that I didn’t have the information or didn’t know that we decided not to do that...because I would NOT be at the meeting at 5:00 – I couldn’t be...I had to pick up the kids and get them home so I had no flexibility...very quickly she started indicating that she was disappointed in my performance, that she had expected more from a person on the CAP program and started giving the better projects to other employees....She was a Director woman who had never been married, never had kids and was very, what I would call ‘old school’. You do the work that is required of you, you never complain and, of course, that’s why you’re promoted. So from the start I had challenges (laughs) – it’s not funny!”

Elizabeth felt she HAD to find another job, which she did.

Cate had negotiated a start time of 8:30 a.m. since she had to take her young son to school for 8 a.m. This sometimes caused tension for her when she was expected at early morning meetings.

I’d walk in around 8:30 in the morning and people would meet me in the hallway and say, “Brenda [her director] was looking for you – you had a meeting; where were you? ... Brenda [had] called the meeting; she would have sent an e-mail late the night before and say, “didn’t you read my e-mail?”... The new DG was very

understanding because I walked in and said, “you know I can’t be here before 8:30 because I have to take my son to school...and she’d say, “yeah yeah we know”.

Cate wondered, however, if there were hidden repercussions career-wise of her not being able to be at work before 8:30:

Now I have noticed with her [the DG] however, that she would have that polite response to your face, but it would still be mark against you, so maybe it was, maybe it wasn’t – I just know that now I’m in an environment that there isn’t anything that is so important that you have to be in for 8 o’clock.

Cate’s comment above also demonstrates differences in departmental norms surrounding work hours. In a similar vein, Elizabeth who worked for a number of ‘workaholics’ throughout her career, currently has a boss who is respectful of her hours of work, as shown below:

[He] recognized that I was working longer hours to fulfill extra requirements that were not scheduled or planned...he has really pushed back to the other senior manager and said, no, I want her time reserved for priorities we’ve set within the organization...[and not] just assume that she will do more. He...himself seeks to leave on time and does almost always at the end of the day. He’s perhaps five years from retirement. [He] has a wife that I think he’s feeling he has not spent enough time with during the years he was in the intensity of his career, and who he places a lot of value to spend time with. He absolutely protects that and does so for us as well.

What is particularly notable about her comment is that this boss appears to have spent a lifetime working long hours and is now only realizing the importance of balancing work and home.

As some previous excerpts suggest, some participants in part framed their careers in terms of where they are in life agewise and what that meant for their life as a whole.

Laurie also noted, “you know I have to say that as much as I LOVE my work life, it’s not the only part that defines me, so I find that as I get older I realize that my work...[also] helps me achieve OTHER things that are important to me”. Megan has asked for income leave averaging which means that she can get up to 3 months off and have her income averaged over the yearly period. This appeals to her because she can go away in winter, a season she doesn’t like:

If I can do that, I’m willing to work for quite a bit longer. If my boss had said absolutely NO WAY – I don’t financially need to work; I might think of leaving...I’ve only been here for a little over 7 years so my pension from the government isn’t going to amount to much regardless. As long as I prefer working over not working I will continue to work but if I change my mind, well I’m fortunate I don’t have to work.

Children and Work

Three participants in this study had no children: Wanda, Grace and Olivia. They, nevertheless, cited the need to have personal time away from work and mentioned having to spend much more time than originally anticipated due to work demands. They also valued their personal lives and tried to attend to this as well. Some pondered about

whether they wanted to reach executive levels due to anticipating time constraints on their personal lives.

For Grace, it appears as though not having children was the strategy used for her career advancement due to her perception that career and family are mutually exclusive. She explained:

I chose not to have children...to have a career. I admire women who have both and I really don't know how they do it – the will is there, to be a Mom.... they want to have it all and good for them. It's just it's a selfish choice on my part. My mother stayed at home with both of us until I was at school and I was brought up with the notion the husband, the wife, 2 kids and a white picket fence. I appreciated it much more later on, the sacrifice that she did for us. If I were to have children, I would have stayed home with them. They [working mothers] take a year off and put them in daycare right away. I don't know how they do it, because they're quite sad the first week back. You can just see the struggle and...then to progress to higher levels? I don't think I would have been able to divide myself equally between both...I have no regrets in that area either....it's not something that I wish I would have had a change of heart. But I do admire those that can do it.

As shown in her comments above, Grace admired her mother as well as the mothers she observed at the office, but she feels that neither lifestyle is appropriate for her and she doesn't believe that having children is a good choice for her. She feels working mothers have given up a lot.

The Influence of Pregnancy on Career

Some women in the study spoke about how their pregnancies influenced their careers. Cate described how she had a boss who wanted her to travel, even though she was pregnant at 40 years of age, and had a doctor's certificate saying that she could not travel for three months. She had to be quite blunt with him about what this could mean – she could lose the baby. Her boss suggested she take sick leave but she feared for her career:

[He said] “Well, why don’t you want to fly? Anybody can travel.” His reaction was “well, if you want to take time off and be off for sick leave for your whole pregnancy I’ll support that.” I don’t think he meant it in a nice way...(what would have happened?) oh they would have found someone else...[but I was] guaranteed a position but I didn’t take them up on it.

Moreover, Cate’s CFPS client at the time was also insisting on face-to-face meetings. He “was offended because nobody would go up there to meet in person and I kept explaining ‘I can’t fly’. I think he wanted them to send somebody else”. After she had the baby Cate took her permitted one year maternity leave, but she suspects in retrospect that being away likely stymied her career somewhat: “being out of the office for a year [with] a change in management, set me back because when I came back from maternity leave it was like I was a new employee”. Moreover during this time Cate felt she fell behind two of her male colleagues who had by now both advanced.

Whereas Cate’s pregnancy caused her some difficulties in her career, both Megan and Elizabeth, on the other hand, used their pregnancies to help move their careers forward. Long before she entered the CFPS, when Megan became pregnant with her only

child, she used the time immediately after the birth of her child as an opportunity to obtain her Masters degree in Health Administration:

...I felt that doing my Masters degree at the same time would work for me...I had my daughter in July and went to register in the fall. I didn't quite finish it in the normal two years, it took a bit longer. I didn't have very good arrangements at the beginning. I was getting a mother's helper from England to look after my daughter but it took longer than expected.

In retrospect she is "surprised more women don't use that opportunity to further their education because what I found [was] that I could do so much of the reading at home and have the baby. She was always sleeping, so I had all this time to do my reading and write papers and study".

Elizabeth used an unusual strategy during her maternity leaves to advance her career. When working in private industry, each time she would try to use this occasion as an opportunity to move to other positions and would tell her colleagues of her plans:

[I would tell them] "I don't know where I'm going to go when I come back but I'm going to find a new job [in the same company] so you can replace me" (laughing). They would all take me seriously, particularly in the private sector because I worked as an engineer and I told them I would be looking to change jobs because I was interested in going in the research group...(they would) say, "okay, sure" and I did.

Elizabeth also used this same strategy when she worked at the CFPS and told everyone that when she left on her (second CFPS) maternity leave that she would not be coming back to that job because she had applied to the Career Advancement Program

(CAP). At that time, she hadn't yet been accepted into CAP, but she felt confident that she would be.

I told them, "I'm going off on maternity leave and I'll be off for 6 months and I don't think I'll be coming back here"...they kind of looked at me and said, yeah, yeah and I told them "I've applied to the CAP program and I'm not coming back" and sure enough while I was off on maternity leave I was asked to go and do the interviews and the simulation test for the CAP program.

Not all of her pregnancies were positive experiences. While still in private industry, during her third pregnancy, she suspects that she was laid off from her job due to her openly admitting that she wanted more children. She explained the heartbreaking and difficult circumstances during this period in her career:

I had planned to have three or four [children]. Pregnant with my second child, halfway through that pregnancy, I lost the baby [which was] then easily the most important thing I ever had to deal with....Just two weeks after a very late miscarriage, which was very traumatic for me, they laid me off...a new manager came in and he didn't know anything about me except that I was that woman who had just had a miscarriage...so it was fairly obvious that that had had some impact in their decision not to integrate me. I was a fairly young, and highly paid engineer for the number of years' experience I had. They would have needed to let somebody else go to keep me – one of the guys – and it was easier for them, I guess, to lay me off because I think they were afraid of my coming back....Everybody knew that the only thing I wanted was to get pregnant again. That would have left them short when I went on maternity leave, so I know, quite

certainly, that this had a big impact on their decision to lay me off and not reintegrate me back in the group.

Had Elizabeth been in the CFPS at the time, she would not have been laid off.

Furthermore, the experience in private industry gave her “a healthy fear of being laid off” were she to go back to private industry.

Impact of Having Small Children

Some participants said little about the impact of having a young child at home, probably due to their having had their children many years ago. For those who did not mention struggles or challenges with children, I did not focus on this. Furthermore, except for Grace, Ann and Susan, it is uncertain whether the decision to have or not have children was used as a deliberate career strategy or if there were other factors at play. Grace’s decision was expanded upon earlier. Ann felt social pressure to have a child “against my better judgment”. Although Ann felt that her son is “the best thing that has happened to me in my life”, she feared that she would be “an anxious, smothering, worried mother”, so she placed her son in daycare thinking “I would be a better worker than a mother”. Susan waited until she had a permanent job with the CFPS before having her first child: “By the time I was 31 I had my career and for me that was my security; [I] couldn’t [have a child] being on contract working for the province”.

Two participants, Megan and Elizabeth, referred to having relied in part on a nanny to help them cope with household and/or childcare obligations. As noted earlier, Megan had a mother’s helper when she had an infant. Once Elizabeth had two children she hired a nanny; this, combined with flexible work hours, helped her manage

work/family tensions. She described how it was worth having a nanny once she had two children because “supper was a ridiculously busy time feeding two little ones”.

Although Elizabeth and Becky had the support of a husband at home, Cate did not. She explained how her Director General (DG) provided an opportunity for flexibility, but only after Cate had explained that she was a single mother. She also noted how she would balance the need to work overtime with her child care responsibilities:

...my former DG once asked... ‘well, why are you always doing this? you should get your partner to do this.....and I said, ‘Well, I’m a single mother’. As soon as I said that she backed right off....and stopped making the demands ...I mean for her, that DG...I came in and did the overtime. I would arrange for someone else to pick my son up during the crunches, I would pack a snack and bring him back to the office... until..6:30 at night. I’d come in Saturday mornings with him, because she didn’t expect that all the time, and she understood the family pressures. It made me willing to actually be more flexible. I’ve noticed that in my career the whole time that when I feel I have the respect and support of the managers, that I’m not being forced to do ‘their mode’, I give them more...but if you start trying to push me and tell me I have to do it their way, it’s fine you’re going to get seven and a half hours out of me.

What is also notable about her comments above is her willingness to work overtime seems to be contingent on her feeling respected and not being “forced” to do it. The above comments aside, Cate described few issues with staying late, but she did have difficulties with another manager who did not seem to understand that she needed to

bring her very young son to school before coming to work. . Cate is now in a job where there isn't anything that is so important that she has to be in for 8 o'clock.

Elizabeth, before the birth of her first child, was off travelling around the world on business. In retrospect she thought that balancing career and family would be easy; she was "just completely oblivious to what [having children] would mean to the rest of my life (laughs). Like What?! Having babies and doing career – that would be obvious, you know – off I go!" The birth of her child was a "big reality check".

When Elizabeth needed experience managing staff as part of her CAP requirement, the only opportunity available to her at the time was a job that would require her to commute to another city each week. With three young children at home she was very reluctant to take this on but her future boss pressed her to do it. Here we see how she struggled with her decision.

[He said] "What is this?" and he actually gave me a hard time. He said, "Umpff!" I'll never forget that! I had remembrances of the manager in the other department who had said that I wasn't very ambitious, and he kind of goaded me saying, "Well, here I thought people in the CAP program were pretty ambitious and you're not even going to try this?...you can find a way to get to work if you really wanted to - I'm sure you could find a way"...so I walked away, and I debated this and talked with my husband and humming and hawing, I was just so frustrated that I wasn't finding another opportunity, but in the end I called him back and said, "Yes, I'll do it!"

During her one-year assignment, her child started having difficulties at school, which she attributed to her work. She explained how the problem escalated:

My oldest was only in grade 2 - things were not going well at school... he was acting out and was frustrated. I knew it was because of the stresses with my work... he was just feeling abandoned. He was at French school; my Anglophone husband couldn't help him. I had always been there for him every night [to help with] homework support, and then I wasn't there – I just wasn't there. The breaking point was when I went to a parent-teacher meeting and the teacher told me that my son was aloof and was disinterested and was disconnecting with school and what was going on at home? She asked me and I went “Whoa!... well I've been doing this job and I've been traveling a lot” and she went “Oh, that's what it is”. Sitting there and having a stranger tell me what was going on in my house was kinda like, OKAY, I needed to be hit on top of the head before I saw it.

It was now six months into her one-year assignment. She went to the Director and told him that she could not continue with the travelling. She explained how she framed the circumstances as a family need rather than her own failure, and she also felt sad about doing so. We also sense the inner struggle she was experiencing as she tried to balance her need to be a good mother while fulfilling her career dreams.

I would always say to them actually, “I could, but my family can't” and well, it was a little sad when I think back on the degree to which I could disassociate myself from my family because I really was that ambitious! I was doing the things that I had always imagined I would eventually do...and loved.

She was also fortunate to be able to find another CFPS job in Ottawa.

Role of Partner

Participants cited that having or not having partners played a significant role in their career decisions. Partners were important from various points of view. Sometimes they were considered prior to taking on jobs in which there would be long hours of work. At other times, the sharing of household chores and activities were considered. For those with children, partners sometimes played an integral part in caring for them, whereas in other cases, lack of having partner support in this arena was cited as being at times problematic.

Participants without children cited the importance of partners in helping them with various aspects of dealing with their careers concerning the long hours of work deemed necessary for advancement to increasingly higher levels within the CFPS. Olivia, who had no children, speaks of how her husband “never complained”. She says of her husband, “like I did the long hours – that was okay, he never complained. (L: He never wanted you home?). Never, never, never, never. I have never felt any frustration on that part”. Wanda and her partner, however seemed to have issues around housework responsibilities and Wanda does the “preponderance of the housework”.

During the early part of her career, Becky’s husband was away for months at a time and she therefore relied on an extended family member to care for her child. After her husband became disabled and could no longer work, he became the primary caregiver to her son; he would see to it that “everything’s ready, dinner’s ready, laundry’s done, vacuuming is done – he’s good around the house he doesn’t sit around and mope all day”. This has enabled Becky to stay at work late and work weekends. She was able to take on

more areas of responsibility at work since she didn't have to worry about home and family responsibilities.

Elizabeth and her husband shared nightly responsibilities. At one point she had no flexibility to be able to stay late because at that time she was responsible for picking up the children. "We only had one vehicle; my husband was taking the bus straight home and getting supper going and I had to pick up the kids and get them home— so I had no flexibility". In her present job she still works late hours and describes how she and her husband manage when she needs to work late now:

...if I know it's a night where I'm, 'cause I'm still doing maybe one night a week roughly of working late...I have the flexibility to choose when those nights are with this job, it's very infrequent that I have last minute requests that have to be done then...so we can plan what's a good night for me to work late. Those nights we decide, okay we drove in together but you know, either he's going to take the bus and leave me the car, or else he'll take the car, because he's got to go back for hockey games and that sort of thing. Sometimes he'll come and pick me up, but it's easy for me to take a bus from here, too.

Ann, who had her child years ago, recalled how her husband at the time expected that she "do a lot of the child care and housework and cooking and all of that". She recalled how this was a difficult time for her and how unfair the division of work was in their household, particularly because his schedule was so much easier than hers:

My husband had a professional research type nine-to-five orderly steady job...his career was very regulated... nothing very pressing...no crises, no urgencies...he was getting paid as much as I was, MORE, and his day was so regular: walk at

lunchtime, two breaks with buddies during the day. In contrast, there I was moving along like a freight train. I would go to work at 7 a.m. and I'd leave at 7 p.m. Our lives were very different...he didn't understand why I would let it [work] pull me away from the family.

The situation took a toll on Ann personally as well as on their relationship. She ended up "exhausted and divorced".

Participants with partners usually spoke of how their partners supported them in their careers or in their decisions concerning important aspects of their development. For example, Becky mentioned that her husband was "very proud of the accomplishments that I've had in my career and where I am today at the EX-minus-01". When she travelled for work her husband would always make a point to drive her to the airport.

When Grace was attempting to decide on whether or not she would take education leave and go back to university later on in life and complete her undergrad degree, she described the role that her husband and family played by being supportive. Her husband supported her not only morally, but also financially, since she was only obtaining 35% of her salary during that time. She, for her part, had made a point to speak to her husband because "I realized that this would be a long-term commitment – it was not something that I could do in two years like the previous certificate program...it's going to take an awfully long time to do it at night". Olivia also spoke about the moral support provided by her husband. She commented how "my husband believed in me...he would say 'you are able, tu es capable, vas y! You can do this'". She mentioned, for example, that she felt that he admired her accomplishment when she rose to an EX-minus-02 level.

Elizabeth recognizes the huge contribution that her husband made towards helping her through her career aspirations and subsequent advancement. She explained:

He has always been the one who's been the cook at home, he's the home organizer...the one who looks after the cleaning and groceries and planning...he even makes cookies...he's always had regular 9 to 5 sort of jobs...with very little travel and that has made a huge difference so he's always been the steady person at home, I've had great support.

In the following excerpt we see how they worked together to make it possible for her to take and succeed in the CAP selection process, for which she is very grateful:

...while I was off on maternity leave I was asked to...do the simulation test for the CAP program which is a two-day process. I was still breastfeeding my third child...the process [for getting into CAP] is that you show up in the morning and they give you a package of documents and information and you have a half day to prepare, and you went in the next morning for the simulation test and there were other tests like an in-basket and a couple of other tests...I had literally taken a hotel downtown so that I was away from the kids, and the baby, to be able to study all night long in order to do that simulation test the next day. I had arranged with my husband that he would come [to the hotel] and I would breastfed and then he would leave with the baby (L: that's love). I know isn't that the craziest thing? That he did that for me? (laughs) I owe him BIG TIME – oh yeah! BIG TIME but that's what he did so I did the simulation test...that's what I did to pass that test.

There was also evidence, however, that Elizabeth's husband struggled personally with the tensions between Elizabeth's jobs and home responsibilities. As implied earlier, Elizabeth's husband "made some significant compromises for my career". At one point, they agreed that he would turn down a lucrative job offer in another city, which resulted in him being unemployed for a year. This was also the time when Elizabeth was enjoying the most rewarding work in her CFPS career (see earlier comments). She is quite certain that her husband would "NOT speak so wonderfully" about that time in her career. Unemployed with six months of severance pay, he looked after the children. And then a crisis arose:

I got a phone call...saying you have to reach your husband at the hospital; he is having a heart attack. He [had] called the 911 to take him to the hospital. [When I] got there they had hooked him up to the machines and said it was an anxiety attack. [This occurred] almost to the day... that his severance had been cut off and he realized "oh my God!"... so he had had stress-related health issues.

Later, when Elizabeth was attempting her one-year out-of-town CAP assignment and when her child was having difficulties at school, her husband again had a "resurgence of his anxiety attacks". Elizabeth knew that she just couldn't complete that assignment.

These days, Elizabeth is in a job that permits her to have a more balanced life, although she is not "heart and soul enthralled by it". One benefit however is that she now can travel with her husband to work, which gives them time to plan household and childcare responsibilities, and make plans for Christmas. "It's useful time for the two of us".

Chapter 5 has described three major themes which emerged that were clearly connected to participants' careers in the CFPS namely: the impact of time-related factors; the effect children have on women's careers, and the role that partners played in helping them advance in their careers. This concludes the findings chapters on personal factors. I now turn to Chapter 6, which addresses organizational factors influencing women's career development and advancement in the CFPS.

CHAPTER 6

ORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS INFLUENCING THE DEVELOPMENT AND ADVANCEMENT OF CAREERS

This chapter is divided into four sections: the culture of long hours, organizational support for learning, organizational networks and the influence of superiors.

Culture of Long Hours

Every participant identified that working long hours was an important organizational norm for those who wanted to advance in their careers. Participants recognized that when an individual becomes an EX-01 even longer hours are required. For example, Olivia has observed that senior managers “work long hours; it’s not unusual”. Megan re-iterated this view: “the higher level you go, the more work you have to do, and the more hours you would have to put in...I went to a higher level position [acting Director] and I was there till 7 or 8 o’clock every day.”

EX-minus-01s typically fall under a collective agreement which delineates the terms and conditions of overtime compensation. In practice, however, there appears to be a fair amount of discretion on the part of managers regarding expectations and compensation. For instance, Cate had a Director who believed that “the higher you go, the more free overtime you give to the system” and when Susan worked in the North she was expected to put in a considerable amount of overtime. Elizabeth’s experience highlights how working long hours is viewed as a demonstration of one’s level of ambition to rise within the CFPS. Prior to entering CAP, she was viewed by her young PhD researcher boss as “that young engineer who wants to leave at the end of the day, and if she was really ambitious she would be working long hours”. She went on to say

that “he was a major workaholic [and] decided that anybody that didn’t work long hours was not dedicated or committed. I would say to him ‘I’m really ambitious!’ and he would say, ‘I don’t see how you can be if you’re not willing to work long hours in order to advance’”.

The culture of long hours was clearly prevalent at executive level and in some cases, it was exasperated by staff shortage. Wanda’s circumstances are a case in point:

Well, I’m making less now, I mean pension is great but I’m making less per hour now than when I was [names two previous positions] because I’m working now 10 hour days right?...[otherwise] it just doesn’t get done.... With this particular job we are understaffed...we have an org [organization] chart that has ten more people on it than we actually have...it’s not because of a review, it’s just what we’ve been funded, the levels at which we’ve been funded to run the programs.

The funding was [from] 10 years ago...the programs have changed, we are now expected to manage several simultaneous large programs with no FTE’s [full-time equivalents] and no funding...so somebody has to do the work that’s related to them.

She further suggests that she is not the only one that is working long hours saying, “I don’t know of any Directors who are not working anywhere between 10 to 12 hour days – that’s the EX-01’s – even some of the EX-02’s and 03’s are”.

The culture of long hours has been expanded by today’s electronic technologies blurring the boundaries between work and home life. As noted earlier, one of Cate’s bosses thought nothing of e-mailing her late at night to say that there would be an early morning meeting. Elizabeth, for her part, says she can “still keep going for hours at the

end of the day; I call it ‘falling into my computer’ ...when it gets quiet and other people have left, that’s my time to catch up”. When her husband calls her from downstairs telling her that he is there, she says he normally waits for her “as much as 20 minutes or even half an hour for me downstairs while I’m finishing up a few urgent things”.

Blackberries have blurred the work/life boundaries even more. Susan refers to her blackberry being “hooked to your hip”. Grace describes in detail her love/hate relationship with her blackberry. It gives her status yet it keeps her connected to the office during evenings, weekends and even while on vacation:

...when I [came to this department] 5 years ago I got a blackberry right? ...I loved that machine. I thought it was the cat’s meow! I’m always looking at it just in case there’s a red light flashing; on the weekends I’m always looking at it just because you never know. When I go on vacation I take it with me because whoever is my replacement, I work with that person to make sure everything’s okay. I would love to take it and throw it against the wall...I hate it! Because I’m always on call...

Wanda’s relationship with her blackberry demonstrates her relative control over the blackberry rather than it fully controlling her. She also commented on how she uses other technologies:

[I’m] not a crackberry person. I use my blackberry when I’m travelling around elevators or when I’m at meetings – it goes in my pocket – it does come home with me every night. After 6 p.m. I generally don’t check it unless my DG has told me that something may explode. I don’t check it on weekends; I don’t turn it

off, but I don't check it and the phone gets turned on weekends just in case my DG needs to get hold of me. But I'm not checking e-mails.

However, the use of technology has definitely tended to blur the lines of personal home time with work.

Organizational Support for Formal and Non-Formal Learning up to and into the EX-01 Level

This part of the chapter examines the influence of organizational support for learning on participants' career development and advancement toward and into the executive level. I begin by focusing on support provided by the CFPS at entry and during the years leading up to obtaining EX-minus-01 levels. I then describe organizational support linked specifically to entry into executive levels.

Support for Learning Leading up to EX-Minus-01 Level

Two participants launched their CFPS careers through specific, targeted mechanisms. While completing her undergraduate mathematics and statistics degree, in the early 1980's Laurie worked two summers in a Department through an initiative she remembers as being somewhat similar to the Federal Student Workforce Employment Initiative (FSWEP), a program to recruit students into the CFPS. "I don't think I would have been in the public service had I not had that job!", she recalled. "I had lots of fun; I learned a lot". As a summer student who had proven herself competent, and who was close to graduating, Laurie qualified to be bridged into a permanent job through the CFPS's Student Bridging Mechanism. "They offered me a permanent job...it was outrageous, \$21,000 a year! I thought that was great, so I accepted and started working full time as an ES-02 (Economics and Statistics level 02 position).

Wanda entered the CFPS through a job that she felt she had “always wanted to do”. Upon being successful in the competitive process, she immediately received extensive training from her organization pertinent to the duties of her first job. She was hired through a collective staffing process in which all successful candidates had a bachelor’s degree. After completing a specialized training program related to law enforcement she “worked on surveillance” in her department. Although Wanda did not elaborate on the training program itself, it is reasonable to assume that she received extensive training since her job required the use of a restricted firearm. The focus of her work has changed over many years, but this first organizational training and support appears to have influenced her career direction in that she has spent almost all of her career in the same department.

Early in her career, Ann was one of “26...elite...people” who had been accepted into an apprenticeship initiative within her department that was designed to help women like herself, who had a degree but who had entered the CFPS at a very low clerical level. She explained:

...Some very far-sighted people...realized...in the late 70’s...there were a LOT [her emphasis] of employees [with] university degrees in clerical positions...a large number of them women, and that something should be done about the situation...the apprenticeship program was established for a number of employment categories...I applied...and was one of 26 people [accepted into the Organization and Management Group].

She found this initiative to be “well laid out...[and] received excellent training”. She worked as “part of a team”, had a “strong leader” and learned from having “a good

experience...with management consultants and working with men”. Notably, the initiative helped her learn how to conduct organizational level analyses, as shown below:

[We learned] how to conduct organization studies to determine whether or not an organization is...using effective, efficient methods, systems and procedures. A lot of the work we did then was related to processes. For example: Where do you get the form? Who do you give the form to? Who gets the form next? Who signs it? Who approves it? Where do the forms go after that? We were trying to figure out the most streamlined way of conducting government business and our approaches were based on industrial types of systems and procedures studies.

As individuals rise into progressively higher levels and begin to manage staff and their own budgets, at some point they are often required to take several days of mandatory training in human resources, finance, materiel management, and values and ethics to be able to be granted delegated signing authority. Olivia recalled, for example, having taken such a course when she rose to her EX-minus-01 status.

Organizational learning opportunities, however, varied greatly from one participant to another as they advanced into increasingly higher levels. Susan offers an explanation as to why this happens. She believes that learning opportunities are “hit and miss” and that individuals themselves need to identify their own learning needs. She explains:

...it is really up to the department, the branch, the supervisor that you have whether there's learning dollars to be able to focus on those core skill sets that you need for your job – It's a real hit and miss. I've seen it...[you need to be] very clear as to what your own learning plan and investments need to be...a LOT of people don't have that.

Susan herself believes that she had been extremely fortunate in this regard when she worked in the North. Her department was “flush” with training dollars, and when she identified a gap in her training she had a very supportive manager who would approve funding for courses at the Canada School of Public Service. “[These were] top-notch courses...they were targeted, they were focused. I’ve had many opportunities to take them,” she recalled. Olivia, for her part, felt that she needed and wanted to take a conflict resolution course when she became responsible for managing staff; her superiors agreed. She noted that she was interested in “the human aspect of managing staff”.

For their part, Wanda, Grace and Olivia received various levels of financial support for their formal learning programs at Colleges and Universities. Wanda received 50% of her MBA tuition, a degree that she completed on her own time. Grace received 50% funding for her two-year Police Science Certificate. Over the course of the nine years that she spent completing her undergraduate law degree, she received various forms of support. Earlier on in her program she was permitted, as part of her career progression and training, “to take a course during the day and then I would have to put in the extra hours”. The CFPS also paid for courses and books when these were deemed pertinent to her current work: “[For my] Women’s Studies [courses in the program], they wouldn’t help me pay for that, but if it was more law, [they would], because I was writing security legislation at the time. When Grace changed departments, she also negotiated an eight-month education leave at 35% salary to complete her degree.

In Olivia’s case, the CFPS paid all costs of her recent 10-month Management Development Program for Women and she was also permitted to have three days a month off from work to attend her courses. Unfortunately, Olivia believed that the program

would probably have helped her more had she taken it earlier in her career because “a lot of what was taught, I knew about”.

Organizational support for Becky’s learning throughout her rise to the EX-minus-01 level has been quite minimal and has mainly focused on immediate needs. When Windows was first introduced, for a couple of weeks the CFPS “loaded games, models of Crystal Caves, for people to learn how to use the mouse”. For the last three years, she has not taken any training except for “mandatory training...for systems – we have at least 15 different [financial] systems in our shop”. Due to operational requirements, and being in a very busy Minister’s office, she has found herself with “no time to look [after her] career because you’re always putting out fires”.

Second Language training supported by the CFPS was a special case in point in that virtually everyone is affected, in one way or another, by the bilingual requirements of many positions. French language training seemed to be particularly problematic for participants. Three types of competencies are used to determine linguistic profiles for positions as well as individuals: Reading, Writing and Oral. For each of these competencies there are five possible levels of proficiency: X (failure), A (basic), B (intermediate), C (advanced), and E (exemption from further testing due to high language competence). Furthermore, positions are categorized according to English essential (bilingualism not needed); bilingual non-imperative (training will be provided to meet linguistic requirement); bilingual imperative (bilingualism required). Each CFPS position has a linguistic profile requirement; for example, an individual who applies for a BBB non-imperative job may be hired without that profile, but with training support would

need to acquire that linguistic level within two years. However, an individual who applies for a BBB imperative job must meet that profile to be hired.

Becky, Elizabeth and Olivia spoke French and English at home, so it's not surprising that the bilingual requirements were not an issue for them. In fact, at age 18 Becky received her first job in the CFPS because she was bilingual.

Susan's career advancement has been seriously stymied by the CFPS's bilingualism requirements. She spent approximately half of her CFPS career in the Far North and in a Western province in English essential positions. When she moved to Ottawa, she soon realized that she needed French language training if she hoped to advance in her career. However, her English essential position that she currently holds in Ottawa has made it difficult for her to obtain organizational support for French language training. Susan has been seeking to move into another direction in her CFPS career but perceives, even to move laterally, that "you HAVE to have your CBC". Furthermore, she has tried in vain to negotiate deployments to other departments in the hopes of receiving French language training: "[When] I came here to Ottawa...[I realized] that there's a line-up a mile long with your peers...who have been waiting and promised and promised and promised [to receive language training]".

Cate, in contrast, received considerable organizational support for French language training. Early on in her career, when she was in a bilingual non-imperative position, she received 8 months of full-time French language training while, at the same time, receiving her full salary. Later in her career, when her linguistic profile had expired – which occurs after five years if an individual changes jobs – Cate had become so indispensable to her Director that "he was willing to give me anything, and that's how I

got my language training...so I could get my B levels back at least”. More recently when Cate went on a 6-month assignment to another department, a ‘BBB’ level position was created to match her linguistic profile with the concomitant title of Policy Analyst, although she was actually fulfilling the duties of the Manager position that had a ‘CBC’ level requirement. Cate was led to believe that she would be permanently deployed and would subsequently be sent on French language training in order to meet the CBC profile. Unfortunately, the deployment never materialized and, therefore, she never received the training.

The experiences and observations of several participants raises the issue of whether or not French is always necessary when it is deemed to be so for a given job. For example, when Grace was concerned about accepting a job where she believed she would have to write Ministerial correspondence in French, the hiring Director quickly dispelled her fears: “ [The Director said] ‘Oh my God! Why?’ and she was quick to add ‘No, no, the Minister is English; you have NO worries about that...we write Ministerial work in English’”. Susan questioned, for example, the fact that at Canadian Heritage, which has the mandate for Official Languages, employees from “AS-01 all the way up you HAD to be bilingual” even in the West where clients rarely require French services. Cate recalled how a colleague who was born and raised in the Yukon and who worked at another department there, was “forced to learn French”.

Organizational Support for Learning to Break into the Executive Level

Theoretically the CFPS supports French language training for one’s current job and not for further career advancement, although some are granted training for developmental purposes. Most EX-01 positions require a linguistic profile of CBC, which

creates challenges for those who don't meet that profile. French language training for those aspiring to enter into the EX levels is neither automatic nor easy. After all, there are more than 10,000 EX-minus-01s (Table 1 in Chapter 2); therefore, it's likely there are a significant number who hope to break into the EX levels yet lack the necessary linguistic profile. Cate attempted to negotiate for French language training to get her to CBC levels once her 6 month assignment became permanent. However, this never materialized.

Susan, for her part, was in an English essential position in a Western Region and described how "because her present position didn't need it [French] that she wouldn't be able to apply for the Director position coming up" in Saskatchewan. Ann described her inability to get to EX levels because of lack of French training. She explained:

Another area of difficulty I have had in my career was with the French language...always Acting, Acting, Acting Director because I could never get the C level...because I could never get sustained French language training. Once I was sent on training and I wasn't gone three weeks and was called back to work – I was crushed! ALWAYS THE BRIDESMAIL! NEVER THE BRIDE! For years and years and years because of the language requirement.

Ann did eventually received her CBC level. Wanda, in contrast, was able to successfully negotiate obtaining her CBC levels. When her boss asked her why she wanted a change and asked her to stay, she replied, "there's only one thing I would bargain on...and that is I need my French language training to go any further in my career... 'no problem, okay' [her boss said]... I had my BBB but I needed a CBC to go any further".

Although in Grace's case French language training did not appear to be a barrier to entering higher level positions, her manager recognized that she needed assertiveness training and arranged to make this happen, which has served her well in her career.

She explained:

Oh, I got hammered more times than you can imagine...because I was told that I'd know something, all men sitting around the table, and I was this young person, I felt inferior and there were times I was made to feel, you're a woman, so you know I would sort of hold back and my boss would tell me that I should be more – he sent me on...an assertive [ness] course". I feel more comfortable and I speak up more... if I have a strong point, I get it out.

Several participants had the opportunity to receive executive coaching to varying degrees at the Personnel Psychology Centre at the Public Service Commission. This service was not really a 'course' but rather individual coaching by former executives of the PSC paid for by the organization to help prepare the individual to enter senior management positions. Both Grace and Laurie received a little coaching from the Personnel Psychology Centre. Grace mentioned having had an opportunity to attend the PPC to meet a coach who could help her prepare for an EX-01 board, however, she claimed that this was 'not very helpful'. She indicated that she had been told "say these things and you will get the job", but said she had done what she had been told at the interview and still had not succeeded. Grace shared that she found it more beneficial to ask people in EX positions how to answer questions rather than having formal coaching. Laurie also described having had an opportunity to go to the PPC prior to trying for her first EX job. She explained her experience:

I think I had gone to the Psychology Centre...spent some time doing in-baskets and this type of thing...they tell you how to prepare yourself [for EX jobs]...I actually did get an opportunity to be coached but it was just a half-day session. I was coached by a retired public servant who was at some point a senior executive in the Public Service and we went through the process of, “What do you want out of your career and do you really think you want to be an EX? It was a recognisant, therapeutical kind of thing (she laughs).

In contrast to Laurie and Grace, who were both provided with a little coaching, significant expense was incurred by the CFPS for Elizabeth’s career development and advancement. Within four years of entering the CFPS, she was accepted into the Career Assignment Program (CAP). This program targeted employees slightly below or just at EX entry executive levels who had demonstrated executive potential. Over a period of approximately three years, CAP participants, such as Elizabeth, took part in a combination of hands-on work experience together with training sessions to prepare them for more senior positions. The cost of the CAP program was approximately \$25,000 or more several years ago; and the home organization, that is the department in which the incumbent worked, bore the cost for training and development through this program. During the practical phase, other organizations that gave CAP assignments, of approximately 12-month durations, paid relocation and salary costs. This permitted candidates to gain diversity of experience (line operations, policy development, central agency, regional operations, corporate services or political exposure). According to Elizabeth, the CAP program “is a program across the federal government...that takes

people... from middle management to their first director level”. Applicants needed a university degree, some type of management experience as well as supervisory experience to be able to prove that they had demonstrated being good performers. Moreover, a requirement was a CBC language profile or the ability to achieve that level if the job required it as well as an enhanced reliability security status. They needed to be able to perform at an EX-01 level within a three-year period of time after the formal component of the program was complete. At the time Elizabeth went through the program, CAP was arguably the most important source of organizational support for individuals aspiring to enter executive levels. Once Elizabeth was accepted into CAP she received formal classroom training, along with other CAP candidates, regarding director level competencies. More importantly, as a CAP participant, Elizabeth was able to negotiate several stretch assignments, to have been of a duration of 12 months each, without having to compete for these positions. These assignments provided her with the depth, breadth and scope necessary to advance into the executive level. For example, in one job she gained experience in policy development. In another, she learned to manage staff. Elizabeth described how “Very quickly the CAP program told me that for the next assignment you must have staff. I looked for 6 months for that first job where somebody would trust me to give me managerial responsibility and nobody would give me that here [in Ottawa]” so she was pressured to take an assignment requiring regular trips to another city. CAP was also extremely beneficial in providing her with a strategic network of colleagues who were also advancing into executive levels (see also networking).

Toward the end of her CAP assignments, and during an evaluation to pre-qualify her as an EX-01, Elizabeth received a “bad performance evaluation” from her previous

manager; she had failed one of 16 competencies. She credits her subsequent manager, a woman, for having supported her through this difficult period where Elizabeth said she was “in total crisis”. This manager arranged for the organization to hire and pay for an executive coach to provide Elizabeth with once-a-week coaching for an entire year, even after she had left that department. According to Elizabeth the cost of the service was “something like \$400 an hour”. Elizabeth claimed that this coach was “the person who was most important to my career advancement”. She described how she really admired her ‘coach’ and recognized her academic background and as being “a bundle of extreme wisdom...a book-learned academic...an encyclopedia of latest techniques and approaches to management issues”. She was so impressed by the level of service that “if today, I had a boss who would agree to my continuing to have support from executive services forever, I would take it.

Organizational Networks

Without a doubt, one’s organizational network – whom you know and who knows you within the organization – was a very powerful tool that helped participants build their CFPS careers. They were important in general as well as for enhancing one’s entry into EX levels.

The Importance of Organizational Networks

Throughout their careers, organizational networks have been of prime importance in helping participants gain access to a range of career opportunities in the CFPS. Wanda, for example, considers networking to be “very important...I would rank it, on a scale of 1 to 10, as a 10”. She went on to say that “I wouldn’t be where I am today without having built the relationships I’ve built”. Wanda believes that networking is even more important

to women than it is to men because, in her opinion, “women need more support in general...[and] it’s not about networking just with other women”.

Laurie reiterated the importance of networking, mentioning that potential candidates are sometimes even identified through their networks prior to a job being formerly posted. According to her, organizational networks are:

... hugely important...if I had to put it on a scale of all those things that you need to help you through your career transitions,...I’d put that one up at the top of the list – I’ve used it over time. I think that’s how people have...move[d] around a lot...they’ll tell you that it’s because they knew somebody that knew somebody and somebody you know, passed their name onto someone else. And it’s that old saying...by the time a job gets to a final posting...there’s probably 4 or 5 other people that have been identified for it through informal networks.

Participants’ informal networks consisted of a number of different individuals and their networks, often including family members, co-workers, former managers and colleagues, as well as friends in the CFPS. Both Grace and Olivia credit their mothers, who worked in the CFPS at one point in time, for helping them enter into the CFPS. Grace’s mother, who worried about her daughter not having any kind of pension plan or security in the job she was in working in private industry persuaded her to apply for a job that she had heard of in the CFPS. Olivia quit her job at a law firm and her mother, who worked in human resources in the CFPS, suggested that she try out for a position that she knew was available for a two-week period, thus launching Olivia’s CFPS career. It wasn’t Becky’s mother who got her into the CFPS; it was one of Becky’s co-workers in retail who also worked in the CFPS. When Becky inquired about possible job openings,

her co-worker got her resume and sent her for a typing test; she passed it and was offered a job. One of Becky's relatives did, however, help her later in her career. When her sister was looking at competition posters for herself, and happened to find what she thought was an ideal opportunity for Becky, she called her to tell her "there was a competition...taking care of finance and administration". Becky went on to explain:

She said, it was the job for me. It was the last day that the competition was posted...I wouldn't have known about this job if she hadn't called me and told me to apply, nor would I have gotten all the opportunities that I have been offered in this department [she was promoted three times]. So I applied and I won the competition.

Cate's experience demonstrates the influence of former bosses. She explained that networking was pivotal in helping her obtain her current job: It was "VERY [important]! That's how I got this job – through networks". She went on to say how that happened. She and her former Director made a list of people they both knew and who knew Cate; and the Director circulated Cate's CV. "I ended up with...two informal interviews for jobs and chose this one", she explained. One of Wanda's jobs actually 'found her'. A former boss who had moved into another department called her to ask her to join him. Even though Wanda was not particularly looking for a job, she accepted and remained with him until he left that position a year later upon which she returned to her former department.

Former colleagues and members of their networks also could be very helpful even if considerable time had elapsed after they had worked together. A case in point occurred when Becky found herself working, many years later, with someone she had worked with

for ten years in another department. At the time, Becky was in a term position that would soon end. Her colleague, who knew someone who was looking for an administrator for resource management in another department, asked Becky for her resume. For whatever reason, Becky never got around to doing so; but her colleague found a copy of her resume and sent it to her contact. Becky was called for an interview, passed the necessary test, and ended up working there. Grace has also found several jobs through knowing people she had previously worked with. In one instance she described how she worked in a job for several months and then when another position came up in her previous section she “started connecting with managers, or different people where perhaps with their contacts, [they would] help me out”. In another instance, someone told her about a competition he was running and suggested she apply for it; she did, and got the job. Yet another time, her department was downsizing and she feared for her job. She contacted a former colleague who had been at the same level as she was, but was now at a higher level position in another department. He just happened to have a job for her; she moved into that job shortly thereafter.

As implied above, networks are not developed overnight. Gaining respect and recognition for doing good work and establishing trust within relationships take time. As Laurie pointed out, networks cannot be developed artificially:

You meet people when you’re in a job...people within your team, they know other people and they pass on your name....[Networking] happens because you’re good at what you do...people respect you for what you do... they pass your name on and tell you about other [job opportunities]. It’s not when you artificially attend [networks of specific groups].

Laurie provided her own example. When her boss reneged on a promise to give her an acting position, a promise he had put in writing, she “called a very good friend” to tell him what had happened to her. The friend told Laurie “you know if you want I could find you a job at [another department] – I know people there – they’re looking for people that have your sort of skills in policy and it would be great to have you there – I’m sure they’d love to meet you”. The next week Laurie had a new job! At another time, Laurie’s work on a special project was due to end and so she applied for another job elsewhere. Someone recognized her name on the application, called her prior to the competition being completed, and offered her the job. Laurie’s experience also clearly demonstrates the power of being known by individuals in other people’s networks and how subtly this networking relationship happens; in this way it seems that the CFPS, despite its large size, is a ‘small world’.

Networking Linked to Breaking into the EX level

The experiences of several participants highlight the role that organizational networks can play in one’s attempts to break into the EX level. Susan’s experiences demonstrate how difficult it can be to establish networks when one has spent most of her working life outside the Ottawa region. After having spent a number of years in the North and in a Western region, Susan arrived in Ottawa as an EX-minus-01. She understands that networking is “vital just for your own knowledge of your topic...your career progression...if you don’t know who else is doing what, you’re going to miss out on opportunities,...knowledge, and those connections with your own colleagues that you might have a kindred spirit with”. She explained that she was “on the odd committee but nothing to mesh a relationship or to call people”. Moreover, her current Director openly

discourages her from sharing information with others: “He told me I wasn’t allowed to talk to others because, heaven forbid that we would share any information”. She contacted the Association of Professional executives of the CFPS (APEX) in the hopes that it might be possible for her to be linked with someone and maybe even to be invited to a “breakfast meeting where a senior manager will bring one of their brightest [EX-minus-01s or 02s]”. Not surprisingly, given that networks are based on established relationships, her request led nowhere.

Working groups were cited as a particularly good way for participants to interact with others from different areas of their departments and in regions as well as in other departments across Canada. It would seem that such experiences may be particularly helpful for positioning oneself for an EX level competition, in part because one is *seen* by others, some of whom may be at or close to EX levels. Laurie noted that “there are a lot of different working groups that have been set up – a lot of the work we do now is horizontal [across departments but may include various level positions]...it’s not like anybody can sit around anymore and work on a file on their own without interacting with other people”. Wanda told how she used working groups that she had been involved with in her department which included regional people across Canada, and how her networks ran deep in the department she was in, since she had been in the same department for eighteen years. She explained the breadth of her networks as well as how she made a point of nurturing them which, no doubt, has contributed to her being able to break into the EX-01 cadre. She explained:

Throughout my career I’ve been involved in a number of working groups; we are a regional organization, for the most part, so it’s necessary to have that network of

regional contacts. I've...developed and maintained them. Sometimes...as you move on to different files, you're not so engaged with those people, you're in touch with them less often than you would be in a formal working relationship but I still try to maintain those relationships....When people come to Ottawa on assignments, I try to get together with them and go out for supper or have a drink or do something. I try to make the time...and still keep them going.

Being brought to high-level meetings was also a way to increase one's visibility with senior level managers. As noted elsewhere (see Supportive Actions of Superiors), both Laurie and Wanda were able to do this, thereby increasing their networks within higher levels.

Both Laurie and Grace obtained a little bit of assistance through the formal route of being coached by the Personnel Psychology Centre to prepare for their EX job applications; however, neither one considered this to have been particularly helpful. Rather what they both felt was most helpful was that through their contacts they had approached people and asked for help in preparing to go through an EX competitive process. For example, Laurie said, "I got information from people about how to prepare yourself for an executive competition, what kind of questions you typically are asked and...how you respond". Similarly, Grace later told me how she had developed questions that might be asked, and asked people how she should answer these possible questions on an EX board. Both Grace and Laurie are EX's today.

Elizabeth described how her main network was established when she entered and progressed through CAP, an opportunity that very few EX-minus-01s have. She has built

very helpful and enduring relationships with the 15 other CAP candidates who went through the program at the same time. She explained:

The CAP program has been a HUGE advantage to me in my career...for two and half or three years I was on the program we had regular meetings with the group that I was with...6 weeks worth of training outside of our work environment...16 [of us] at the same stage in our careers across various departments, various backgrounds, some science people, some finance...a little bit of everything... We went to Nunavut...to Yukon...out west...met with business leaders and community leaders from everywhere; we went and visited shelters for homeless people...drug treatment places in Vancouver...finding out what is Canada as new executives.... So you ask, who am I still in touch with? – THEM!

One can imagine how travelling, learning together with colleagues of the same calibre, and having similar experiences, would likely establish a bond or closeness of some kind. Elizabeth's CAP network has served her well over the years. They still get together at least three to four times a year and go out for dinner. She shared how the network was used. At times, if she was looking for a job, she would call someone who had worked there to see if that was "the place to be". She also asked people to make phone calls on her behalf; and she too, has often helped others find jobs through her connections. As others have mentioned previously, her CAP network is "not the kind of network of friendships where I call people on a day to day basis; but when we'd get together [someone in the group might say] 'Oh My God! This is what happened; I don't know what to do!'" In this sense, this group always had someone to use as a trusted sounding board that knew what the individual was going through and offered possible solutions.

Influence of Superiors on Career Development and Advancement

The actions of superiors, both supportive and non-supportive, tended to influence participants' careers in the CFPS in important ways. These types of actions are explored below.

Supportive Actions of Superiors

Although participants rarely used the term mentor to describe the types of relationships they had with those who helped shape their careers, they did refer to helpful superiors who had done so. Superiors influenced the careers of participants through a variety of supportive actions. A principal way that they provided support was through partial funding for formal university programs for Wanda (MBA), Grace (Police Certificate; B.A. Law) and Olivia (Management Development Program for Women Certificate). They also committed money in their budgets for training and development provided by the CFPS. For example, as noted earlier, Becky received training to learn numerous financial systems that she needed for her job, Susan's manager permitted her to take courses at the Canada School of Public Service, Grace's manager paid for assertiveness training, and several participants received French language training.

Another means of support by superiors was through providing participants with opportunities to grow and develop in their careers. Several participants made a point of highlighting how seemingly simple words of support from superiors made a difference in their careers. For example, when Susan thought she needed courses, she found her manager very supportive. "He was wonderful, [he would say], 'I think you're right...the Canada School of Public Service [has] top notch courses'". When Cate was hesitant about applying for a job in the North, her supervisor persuaded her to take the job. She

explained: “he had been my good boss in the department....[He] bawled me out for not applying. He talked me into, and supported me in going up [north]”.

When superiors recognized that several participants needed new challenges, they gave them new jobs. Becky’s “Director... transferred [her] from being a secretary to doing project management work...he always encouraged [her] to learn new stuff”. When Wanda had found another job elsewhere, her Director General asked: “Why are you leaving? Are you unhappy?” She told him she was bored and just needed a change. He quickly responded, “we have an opportunity for you—don’t go anywhere!” He clearly supported Wanda’s staying within the department and she got another job in a new section of the department. Grace was offered a position that provided her with a stretch opportunity to work on “an enormous project in a predominantly male community that [she] didn’t know anything about”. This manager “placed an enormous amount of trust in me...I was the least likely candidate you can imagine to work on this project. I didn’t dress the part...I was in suits and dresses and not jeans and boots!” Grace developed a great deal of respect for this manager and maintains that “I’d JUMP at the chance to work with him again!”

Occasionally, a superior acted as a strategic advocate to help advance a participant’s career. One notable example was Elizabeth’s Director who agreed to lobby senior management on her behalf for extensive financial support (approximately \$25,000) to permit her to compete for the Career Assignment Program (CAP).

A very important way that managers helped some participants’ careers was through permitting them to accompany them to senior level management meetings, so they could get a small sense of the higher level executive milieu. Before Laurie entered the

executive level, one of her previous managers was particularly helpful in this way. “[He] was wonderful – he took you everywhere, if he had a meeting with the Deputy Minister and he felt you needed to be there because you had the information he brought you along”. Similarly, Wanda’s bosses, all but one of whom have been men, have always been “more than accommodating” in agreeing to bring her with them to high-level meetings which helped her learn “how the decision-making process works”.

Several participants made a point to speak of managers who were exceptional for one reason or another. In their descriptions of some of their superiors, one could sense how much they valued the way these individuals conducted themselves and how they made it a point to be respectful. Laurie appreciated managers who respected your opinion, even though it may not have been his/her views yet when necessary could be decisive. She described one particular boss who was “phenomenal”. She felt that he had “all the right characteristics...respectful...collaborative...complimentary...gave you the space that you needed and wanted, was realistic...not ‘full of himself’...very smart...[and] was so careful on how he provided advice... always made it as ‘this is my view’; [but] when he needed to say ‘this is what we gotta do’, he was assertive in that way so it was clear”.

At three different times in her career Becky returned to work for the same manager. As shown below, Becky valued this boss’s strong inter-personal skills:

He was a really good boss...he was thoughtful... supportive; he would have patience; if you didn’t understand something he’d take the time to explain it to you...he gave me interesting work to do...[not] always routine.... It wasn’t like now in cubicles with no noise...[we] liked to have fun in the workplace...we liked to

laugh and joke and we'd get together as a group at his place or at other people's places, we'd have BBQ's...we had a really good working relationship.

Exceptionally, Elizabeth referred often to excellent bosses she has had throughout her career. Three in particular stand out. During her earlier days, when Elizabeth was in her 'dream job' as a scientific expert with a specially created team of policy analysts, she worked for "probably the best ADM [Assistant Deputy Minister] that I've ever had in my career". She described in great detail how, in her eyes, this man was so extraordinary; moreover she recognized how she learned from his example:

He knew how to do his work; how to delegate...coach... negotiate... find good solutions. This was a tough file... he just exuded an air of confidence...calmness, an honest desire to do a good thing; and people sensed that from him almost from the second that they met him. He was really quite an amazing man to work with. Ah, compassionate; competent; caring; gentle while still being determined, results-oriented, just very successful... INTEGRITY [her emphasis] Oh, gosh yes! He built good relationships with people quickly, he knew how to maintain them, and I think it wasn't just about working with him; ...he hired everybody else...who had similar values and similar competence, *and I got to...learn from all of this* (italics added).

The second example was her manager who "took me under his wing literally". He would tell her that whatever she needed to learn, she could call him anytime and he would coach her and loved "teaching me...I was a great sponge, I love to learn so it was wonderful".

The third example occurred when Elizabeth went to work for a DG after she had worked in a very difficult situation after had received a "bad evaluation,...was pretty much burned out, and [was] in total crisis". She suspects that her new boss had known that the [bad]

evaluation was coming before she did because the woman had already started steps to hire an executive coach for Elizabeth. “We met with coaches, interviewed them and discussed who it was that I ultimately picked...who I would be most comfortable with – she did me such a huge favour in proposing this coach”. Even after Elizabeth had left this branch, the organization continued to support this expensive one-year coaching contract. Elizabeth credits this DG for having been “a huge influence on me in terms of re-establishing my confidence and informing me with respect to my shortcomings and helping me to work on [them]”.

Non-Supportive Superiors

Participants shared how negative actions by superiors influenced their careers in one way or another. Early in her career, at one point Becky worked in the CFPS through several temporary employment agencies. One of those jobs was working for a senior counsel (lawyer) which led to Becky being appointed to a more secure CFPS ‘term’ position due to her having made improvements to various administrative and office processes. Her immediate supervisor seemed to resent her “because I was doing a better job than her”. Becky decided not to accept the term appointment: “it wasn’t the place for me to work because I didn’t get along with her that well”. After Becky left, the supervisor wrote a “nasty” evaluation – “a really bad rating”—to the temporary agency who had found Becky the original job. Becky wrote to the Labour Board, to the General Counsel and to the Human Rights Commission to demand an apology, which she got. Nonetheless, that agency “never hired [her] again!”

Laurie, the only Black woman in this study, recognized that racism has been and continues to be a serious issue for some visible minorities and Aboriginal peoples

working in the CFPS. She herself has found that this has not hindered her career in any significant way. She had a unique way of dealing with what could be construed as subtle racist comments. When she first joined the CFPS her boss told her “You’re really neat, I’ve never had a Black person work with me before”, at a time when there were few Black women in the CFPS, especially in mathematics and statistics. Laurie went on to say, “...some people might think that was offensive” but she took it to mean, “Okay, I’m really neat!” (we both laughed)...have fun with that!” Throughout her career, Laurie has openly chosen to not react to possibly racist comments and claimed: “I can remember times or people that have said things to me that may have been...considered sexist, racist, harassment...I chalk it up as their weakness and...try ...avoiding a confrontation...so I can be who I am”. Laurie reflected upon an example:

...when he [her former boss] said, ...his reason for not wanting me there was that he just didn’t want me [but I suspected that] he didn’t want a Black woman to be in that position...I didn’t take it directly that way...there’s no advantage to using the fact of being a visible minority. I always tell people that – don’t use it as a crutch...if you dwell on it ...they’ve got you...it curbs your spirit...you’re not able to be the person that you need to be...you have to find a way to just flip it on it’s head and say, “I AM BLACK and [he or she] may not like me – their problem!

Elizabeth, Cate and Olivia recalled instances of psychological harassment (http://www.yvonbrooks.com/harcelement_en.html). Elizabeth’s boss would make hurtful comments such as: “Oh look....somebody is sick again in the office – oh we didn’t used to get colds like this; it must be because we hired a woman who has three kids”. Elizabeth recalled how her boss would say this in front of all the staff “jokingly,

but regularly...it was focused towards me and it was her making somewhat serious comments". The relationship deteriorated further and Elizabeth found another job. She was, however, very cautious and diplomatic about how she announced her departure, framing it as a mutually satisfactory decision. Elizabeth recalled how the meeting was "pretty intense...a bit scary" because she knew that this was "a fairly powerful woman who had decided that I was an enemy of hers" and that they would still be obliged to work together in some capacity. Olivia's case involved a colleague whom she felt was bullying her; they were expected to work closely together yet he refused to answer questions, stopped speaking to her, and wouldn't even look at her, and she had no idea why. After having tried unsuccessfully to resolve this herself, she sought advice and support from her boss, who "did nothing". "I think that really upset me more than the fact that this guy wasn't talking to me...I thought I would find support in her...some advice as to how I should deal with it that I had not thought about...[or] even say, 'Listen, I'll see what I can do about this'". Olivia was so upset about her circumstances that she consulted literature about bullying. She also consulted a CFPS conflict resolution person who, having learned that she was at a lower level than her colleague, basically told her "you're lower than this guy so take it and shut up". She left the job "because [the situation] was too difficult". Cate learned third-hand, through a man she was casually dating, that her supervisor was "spreading rumours about me being a lesbian, being a cold fish because I didn't have a boyfriend". Cate, feeling shocked and hurt, consulted the Ombudsman who cautioned her: "you have a right to grieve and if you were to put a grievance in, you would win but it would ruin your career". Cate also knew of a colleague who had filed a sexual harassment complaint against another boss and had won, but Cate explained, "...it

took 5 more years to rebuild her reputation in the department – because she had a reputation as someone who ruined a man’s career”. Cate decided not to file a grievance.

Wanda, for her part, did file a grievance early on in her career, and learned first-hand the ramifications of doing so. She submitted a formal complaint against her superiors because they had denied her engagement in a possible armed incident. She explained:

I felt it was a...legitimate complaint...I [had] the same training as everybody else.... Their logic was... “you haven’t done [it before]” and well, there’s a bit of a catch 22 because I had never been able to do [it]... I didn’t buy that.... I think that it was [a] sexist decision that they made, so I filed a complaint...no one in the region knew how to handle it”.

She wasn’t prepared for the “ugly situation” that unfolded. “You’re young...you go to government and you surmise that people...will act in a professional manner”. She was shocked to find that her supervisor would “call [her] at midnight and start asking [her] about why she filed this complaint...it was just an eye-opener”. She was upset to learn that “a whole bunch of information...was floating around the office in hands that it shouldn’t have been in... EVERYBODY KNEW...what was happening. Some people supported me 100% and other people didn’t; but it was a relationship that went bad”.

Wanda further believed that “at the time, most of the senior managers in [the region where she worked] had a kind of dictatorship style... If you didn’t do what you were told it was threatening, it was intimidating”. Fearing the possibility of being transferred to “some Godforsaken place” she felt that the timing was right for her to “get out of that line of work” and move out of the region. After she had relocated to Ottawa in another CFPS

position, she would occasionally see her former supervisor on his visits there. However, “he wouldn’t talk to me”. Wanda would make a point to say “Hi, how are you doing?” every time she saw him and feels that “we’ve kind of moved past that...but it took a little bit of massaging...I had a meeting with him the other day, and everything was fine”. She also feels that she learned a lot from this very unpleasant experience and perhaps importantly she learned to “develop a spine and say like, I don’t have to take this – I can stand up and say, ‘this is not right’”.

Laurie described an unacceptable breach of promise in her career. Her boss had promised her that she and a colleague would each share a 6-month period as Acting Director. When he reneged on his promise, she described how she felt slighted:

...[he said] that he was going to keep [the other woman in the acting position] for the entire year... Well, that’s very fine and dandy but it’s a slap in my face... The reality of it was that I had a letter that [he] had actually signed...so I said, “You’re breaking a contract to me...I could have gone anywhere else but I wasn’t going to go because I was being considered for this job...we both made a commitment...I’m living up to my end of the bargain but you’re not”. He basically said, if I didn’t like it, ‘tough...you can leave’ - so guess what? within 3 weeks I left.....(laughs) because I saw another job that I liked.

Several participants noted that superiors in EX jobs sometimes seemed to be interested only in their own careers and not the careers of their subordinates. Ann recalled two superiors who had what she called “blind ambition”. The first she described as someone who “would destroy anyone who got in his way...use your work and say it is theirs, lie about you”. In the second case, she felt the woman was “very very nice...but

would do ANYTHING to get ahead [her emphasis]...she spent all her time getting ahead”. Ann didn’t take any action but she made a point of saying, that she should have changed jobs. She saw others “doing just that...they didn’t get along with the boss...they immediately looked for something else and moved on to other positions”. Becky and Laurie made the point that some individuals in the Accelerated EX Development Program (AEXDP) seemed to be particularly interested in their own careers, at the expense of their subordinates and the organization. Laurie worked for a year with an AEXDP manager “a nice person, but she came out of the AEXDP program where it was ‘about me [her boss] you gotta make ME look good...what can you do for me...[not what we can do to help each other’s careers]...but what you need to do for me because I AM AN AEXDP [her emphasis]...and I must be great’”. Becky makes the point that those being groomed for higher executive levels...

don’t really do much to help you in your career; they think about themselves and their career...[AEXDP] assignments are 18 months long so they don’t seem to be able to dedicate their time to the organization – their time is mostly dedicated to their own career advancement...they spend a lot of time going to seminars and sessions to accelerate their development.

Olivia, Grace and Elizabeth mentioned examples of senior managers who seemed to display questionable managerial behaviours. Olivia recalled having regretted having accepted a job working for a Deputy Minister who was “not a very personable person, very cold...[and] he would never share anything...would rarely ever talk to me [despite working together] 10 hours a day”. She was very surprised and disappointed at his

behaviour because she had previously worked for a Minister who was the complete opposite.

Similarly, Grace wasn't impressed by the management style of some of the senior managers in her department. 'I didn't think of going to an EX level...I looked around and saw what EX-01's were doing. Now...there are not that many that I want to emulate...I don't think there are 5 on a list of one hand...' Elizabeth noted a similar point and explained why perhaps she is more apt to network down than up with senior level managers, "yeah, I don't network up a lot...I don't know exactly why. I know that the networks up that I've seen – I'm fairly critical of the people ahead of me, and I see a lot of people who are leading in ways that I'm not pleased with in the Public Service".

At one point in her career, Elizabeth was hired to lead a major downsizing and restructuring of a CFPS organization in which people "stayed from cradle to grave". She described this experience: "I was carrying all of the pressure, I was still a young Director...fairly inexperienced dealing with "regional directors—all men who had built their fiefdoms". She was perhaps naive in believing that doing a good job would enhance her career status in the eyes of her superiors. "I built great plans, I built great arguments, I built great proposals that had drawn on everybody's knowledge in the organization so I succeeded extremely well in getting the result", so much so that her superiors couldn't dismiss her downsizing proposal. She eventually came to realize that she was an outsider and therefore expendable, and this is why they had asked her to do it. "I was the one who did it...[it] led me to a place where they were not going to keep me in the organization, explained Elizabeth. She went on to say:

...my last meeting [was with]...Directors...and ...Directors General across the country,...presenting to them how we would manage this restructuring of their strategic funds...after almost 4 years with the organization, I walked out of that committee [and] thought, surely somebody could have acknowledged that I had made some important contributions to the organization – NOPE! I walked down to the parking and got into my vehicle and cried for an hour!...my husband has said to me since then, ‘do you realize that you were used at [that organization]?’ “I was brought in as the Axe person”.

Chapter 6 has highlighted the four organizational factors that appear to have had significant impact on women’s career development and advancement: the culture of long hours, organizational support for their learning, organizational networks, and the influence of superiors. I now turn to Chapter 7, which provides a discussion of the three previous findings chapters and is organized according to the three guiding research questions.

CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSION

In this chapter I have divided my discussion into three parts according to the study's three guiding research questions as follows:

From the perspectives of women themselves...

1. How have personal factors influenced career development and advancement of women in the CFPS towards and into the EX-minus-01 and EX-01 levels?
2. How have organizational factors influenced career development and advancement of women in the CFPS towards and into the EX-minus-01 and EX-01 levels?
3. How have these two factors combined to shape women's CFPS careers?

Research Question 1:

How have personal factors influenced career development and advancement of women in the CFPS towards and into the EX-minus-01 and EX-01 levels?

Personal Career Dispositions

According to Bourdieu (1991), "habitus is a set of dispositions which incline agents [individuals] to act and react in certain ways" (p. 12). It can be considered as "a durable but evolving system of dispositions potentially actualized" (Iellatchitch, Mayrhofer, & Meyer, 2003, p. 738). Career habitus, according to Iellatchitch and colleagues, "embraces an agent's mindset towards advancement within the field" (p. 739). By advancement they are referring to various forms of growth such as moving upwards in the hierarchy, building one's reputation, developing one's level of expertise, and so on. In the present study four key personal dispositions that underpinned their career habitus were identified,

namely participants' desire for new challenges, their sense of responsibility for the job, their desire to make a difference, and their tenacity vis-à-vis their jobs.

The vast majority of participants had some type of formal education which likely contributed to their career habitus in that it sparked their desire to seek and accept new challenges. This education provided them with knowledge and skills that, coupled with their proven ability and desire to learn, positioned them to want and be able to do more. For example, Elizabeth's analytical skills have enabled her at one time in her CFPS career to be the scientific voice within a select team of experts and at another time to analyze a departmental branch for downsizing. Tenacity can be observed in examples like Wanda who worked full-time while completing her MBA in two years, and Grace who spent nine long years studying part-time to obtain her law degree while working full-time.

The concept of self-efficacy is particularly helpful to understand how participants' career dispositions have helped them manage their careers. There is good reason to believe that many if not all of the participants had already developed a strong sense of self-efficacy *prior* to entering the CFPS. For example, seven participants had already completed undergraduate degrees, three of whom also had graduate degrees. Cate had earned two graduate degrees prior to entering the CFPS. Elizabeth noted that she had been "at the top of [her] class" in her engineering program. Laurie seems to have easily stepped into a statistics job while she was completing her graduate mathematics and statistics degree.

Once in the CFPS their stories suggest that they saw themselves as self-efficacious in the sense that they desired to learn more difficult tasks. Moreover they were proactive

in asking for more challenging work, not because it would lead to a higher salary since the topic of salary was virtually absent within their stories. Laurie “love[s] when you get a new job” despite it being painful at first; Megan feels that she needs little guidance or supervision on challenging projects; Olivia sees herself as a self-learner; Ann feels that she learns from her mistakes; Becky feels that she learns quickly and can “grasp [computerized financial] systems with little or no training”.

The work settings also appear to have fed participants’ sense of self-efficacy by giving them opportunities to do more challenging work, which in turn appears to have further increased their sense of efficacy. For example, over the years Becky asked for and was given increasingly more complex projects, and she now feels comfortable handling 15 computerized financial systems. At one point she successfully managed a huge portfolio where she learned additional skills in project management, finance, and procurement. When Wanda felt she had learned all she could about one national file, she would request to manage another one, and eventually mastered many files within the department. She also felt that her MBA has given her the capability to write good briefing notes. These cumulative “performance accomplishments” (Bandura, 1977, p. 80), or what Bandura (2005) has more recently called “enactive mastery experiences” (p. 184), no doubt increased her sense of self-efficacy when she was faced with having to write hypothetical briefing notes on several departmental files during her EX-01 exam.

Because self-efficacy is domain-specific (Betz, 2006), scholars have used the concept in conjunction with specific terms such as coping self-efficacy, process self-efficacy, self-regulatory self-efficacy, research self-efficacy, social self-efficacy and so on (Betz, 2007). In the present study participants’ comments about how they managed

staff tend to suggest three types of self-efficacy behaviours that reflect three major categories of leader behaviours (Yukl, 2006), namely task-oriented, relations-oriented, and change-oriented self-efficacy. Megan's relation-oriented self-efficacy seems to have been somewhat weak when she was managing people as an Acting Director. As she put it, "THAT's when you get stressed!", a reaction that Bandura (1997) suggests is an indication of lack of self-efficacy in that domain. Although Ann is "very task-oriented", it appears that at least at certain times in her career, her strong work ethic was not enough to sustain a sense of task self-efficacy as evidenced by her 12-year struggle to keep up with colleagues who had backgrounds much more suited to the tasks at hand (see also Formal Education). Moreover, when she was managing staff, her view was "JUST WORK! JUST WORK!" and she had no tolerance for any type of socializing in the office. She has come to realize that she lacks what I am calling relations-oriented self-efficacy.

Olivia organized a regular forum of six managers to discuss and resolve staff problems with the consent of, but without the presence of, the boss. This innovation seems to have worked quite well, suggesting that she demonstrated both relation-oriented and change-oriented self-efficacy. Wanda, Elizabeth and Becky also described instances where they appear to have shown change-oriented self-efficacy by paying attention to larger issues of importance to the organization: Wanda helped her staff understand why they now needed to provide workplans; Elizabeth felt she had built "cohesion, vision and culture", and Becky helped her staff understand how they contributed to "the larger picture".

Elizabeth and Becky in particular seem to have developed high relation-oriented self-efficacy through mastery experiences and encouragement (Bandura, 1997). Elizabeth defined herself as having “good people skills”; she noted how one of her bosses knew she was better at dealing with people than he was and so he sent her to negotiate with technologists. She “loved pulling the people together”. Becky seemed to be able to adapt to various circumstances that involved relation-oriented self-efficacy. She was comfortable and successful in meeting with the Minister, working with her staff, and even supervising special needs employees. In particular, Becky’s ability to take in stride the special challenges that Marie posed, as well as encouragement from Marie’s job coach and recognition from the placement organization, likely served to reinforce Becky’s overall sense of self-efficacy in handling unusual staff behaviours appropriately.

Participants’ stories also indicated that many of them were tenacious, which in turn seems to have demonstrated their sense of self-efficacy. For example, had Becky not had a good sense of self-efficacy in dealing with Marie, she may well have asked for Marie to be re-assigned. Pursuing a degree while working full-time and being determined to make a new job work out despite lack of support are other obvious examples from other participants.

Elizabeth seems to have already had a particularly strong sense of self-efficacy when she first entered the CFPS. Almost immediately she found a huge error in an important document and tried for two weeks to alert her boss, who refused to listen and also “belittled” her. One wonders if she would have been so tenacious and vocal had she not had a well-established sense of self-efficacy. It turned out she was correct, which led to many subsequent career opportunities which undoubtedly increased her self-efficacy

even more. In another instance, when Elizabeth had to admit that she couldn't complete her one-year obligation working in another city due to family responsibilities, she framed this situation as "I can, but my family can't" (emphasis added). By attributing the failure to her family's inability to cope with her absence, she was able to protect her sense of self-efficacy.

Both Bourdieu's (1977, 1984, 1990, 1996) and Bandura's (1977, 1986, 1997, 1998, 2005, 2009) concepts are useful in helping us understand the possible relationship between tenacity and self-efficacy during a very important and difficult period in Ann's CFPS career. There is considerable evidence that Ann progressed through the earlier part of her career having a strong sense of self-efficacy. When she first arrived in the CFPS she was chosen as one among 26 peers to take part in an elite apprenticeship program; later on, she noted that she won an external CFPS job competition, having come in first out of 350 people; she received a letter in yet another job indicating she was "...one of the BEST people they EVER had working with them". These examples suggest how Ann's self-efficacy may have been developed, namely through enactive mastery experiences, comparing herself to peers (vicarious experience), and encouragement (verbal persuasion), three ways that Bandura argues build self-efficacy. However, when Ann entered a new job in the policy area, she confronted a "field" (Bourdieu) where her prior experiences had not adequately prepared her to succeed. She found herself interacting with "very sophisticated and politically astute" individuals who had graduate degrees in history or political science and who had grown up in political families. Ann believed that her hard work and tenacity would help her do the job well; as Bandura (2009) notes, "people of high efficacy...view difficult obstacles as surmountable (p. 181).

Unfortunately, Ann found herself struggling and enduring “twelve miserable years” in a field where her cultural capital (both institutional and embodied) was simply not sufficient for her to feel successful. Had she been successful, it is likely that the experience would have enhanced her self-efficacy. We tend to believe that tenacity is always a good thing; but as Bandura points out “the very undaunted self-efficacy that breeds success in tough ventures may perpetuate adherence to courses of action that hold little prospect of eventual success” (p. 183). This was certainly true in Ann’s case. She is not alone in having stayed in a job where she could not succeed. In an interview study of CFPS employees by Duxbury et al., (1999), the researchers reported that “eighteen percent said that they had stayed too long in one position, assuming hard work was enough” (p. 76 of 253).

Evidence in the women’s stories suggest that they desired to make “a difference” by contributing in some way to a greater good. Becky contributed to the greater good by helping a special needs employee well beyond what might have been expected from an employer. Some participants described some of their more exciting work by using words that seem to imply at some level that an affective element was present – they *felt* that they were making a difference, for example: “I have shaped the map of Canada”; there was “pizzaz” in enforcing laws that protected people; working on a high level global scientific initiative was “an amazing experience [that] can’t change the world [but can still] make a little ongoing difference”. However, as one of the examples above suggests, participants also came to realize that it is very difficult to effect much change in such a large organization that also has to answer to the government and to the Canadian people. An interview study of CFPS knowledge workers by Duxbury et al., (1999) also captures

this tension between wanting to make a difference and not always being able to do so. Fifty-nine percent of their respondents said that making some form of contribution to society was the most rewarding aspect of working in the organization. They also found that the most frustrating aspect of working in the CFPS was the bureaucracy (75%) of which 16% related to political interference (pp. 98-99, 101-102).

It should also be noted that there was considerable ambivalence around whether or not to attempt moving into the EX cadre. Some of this hesitancy may have been linked to their lack of knowledge of the executive level “field” since few had had Acting Director experiences. This lack of experience has made it difficult for them to believe they were capable, since self-efficacy is developed primarily through mastery experiences (Bandura). Moreover, the fact that they were at mid-life may help explain how they imagined their careers unfolding from the perspective of potential retirement. Davies (2002) among others suggests that at this point in one’s life an individual “shifts from thinking about time since birth, to thinking about time remaining in life” (p. 34). Elizabeth, who had attained EX-01 status at a younger age than any of the other participants, was a clear exception in that she never expressed any ambivalence when describing her CFPS career; virtually everything about her career story suggests that she was the most self-efficacious of all the participants. Perhaps one of the most vivid of her comments was that as a young engineer in private industry she had entertained the idea that she might one day be president of the company, so it’s reasonable to believe that she held few reservations about rising into the executive level.

The concept of serendipity is also sometimes helpful in explaining turns in some individuals’ careers. For example, Becky’s sister came across a competitive poster,

thought she would be the perfect person for the job and called her. Susan met a Director during a coffee break who just happened to be setting up a new district office and asked if she wanted a change. Elizabeth's Director overheard her repeatedly "yelling" at her manager to try to get him to recognize a grave error in a document headed to Parliament. Ann received an unexpected positive reference letter for a job well done. All of these chance events led to new CFPS opportunities that significantly influenced their careers. Becky got the posted job and eventually earned three promotions there; Susan deployed to the new office; Elizabeth's Director became a major contributor to her career success; and Ann used her letter as leverage for a better job (which ultimately caused her serious stress – see Tenacity within the findings chapter).

Although the present study did not link personal qualities to participants' being open to chance events, one might speculate that these two factors may have been linked. Bandura (2005) makes this point when he says that "chance favors the inquisitive and venturesome, who go places, do things, and explore new activities....These various proactive activities illustrate the agentic management of fortuity" (Bandura, p. 20). Support for my speculation can also be found in a study of academic women by Williams and colleagues (1998) which examined the role of chance events in career development. Among the personal qualities noted in that study which coincided with those of participants in the present study were: low tolerance for boredom; not being afraid to try new things; knowing when to move on; being persistent; being competent, hard-working and motivated to do well; having self-confidence; and being alert to opportunities.

Formal Education

Canada has the highest level of educational attainment among OECD countries (Berger & Parkin, 2009); Canadians currently hold more than twice the OECD average of postsecondary educational certificates (Boothby & Drewes, 2006). “More than half of all women in Canada have had some form of postsecondary education” (Statistics Canada, 2006b, p.89) although forty-four percent between the ages of 45 and 64 (which is somewhat comparable ages of participants in the present study) have this level of training (Lindsay & Almey, 2006). By comparison, the percentage of women with post-secondary education, in the present study was 90% (9 out of 10).

As a group, the participants’ levels of formal education were favourably comparable to other knowledge workers in the CFPS. For example, Table 3 compares educational levels of participants in the present study with a sample of knowledge workers in the CFPS in a study by Duxbury et al., (1999). Duxbury et al. used a mixed qualitative/quantitative design which included three groups of CFPS knowledge workers, namely executives, scientific and professional employees, and administrative and foreign service employees. The table includes their findings from telephone interviews and from all survey respondents as well as findings from the present study. As indicated, the education levels among the telephone interview respondents were remarkably similar to those in the present study, although survey respondents tended to have somewhat lower levels of education than those in the present study. The fact that 50 percent of women in my study had one or more graduate degrees suggests that my sample was quite highly educated in comparison to other CFPS knowledge workers.

**Table 3: Comparison of Educational Levels between Duxbury et al. (1999)
and Present Study**

	Duxbury		Present Study
Highest level of Education Reached	Telephone Interview (N=254)	All Respondents Survey (N=2350)	In-depth Interviews (N=10)
No post-secondary	6%	10%	10%
Some college or college Diploma	15%	26%	10%
Undergraduate Degree	33%	35%	30%
Graduate Degree	47%	29%	50%
Multiple Graduate Degrees	33% approx.	n/a	10%

*Duxbury et al. (1999, pp. 47, 136); figures rounded to nearest percent.

Despite increasing numbers of individuals with post-secondary education, it still continues to hold value; employers still seek out and reward those with higher education (Anonymous, 2009; OECD, 2009). All participants recognized this fact in the sense that they believed that anyone aspiring to enter EX level would very likely need an undergraduate degree as a minimum and, depending on the specific requirements of a job, in some cases the individual might even need a graduate degree. Their career life stories help contextualize this point. We learned that Becky, who did not have any post-secondary education, recognized its importance and felt that the EX cadre was unavailable to her because of this. In fact, it is quite remarkable that she has advanced as far as she has, given that individuals in her position are even more likely to be unemployed than those with more education (Attwell, 1999; OECD, 2009). Even Olivia, who does not have a university degree, has managed to rise to EX-minus-01 level.

Literature suggests that those who are promoted and who do so more quickly, are those with university degrees (Elmuti et al. 2003). As for the remaining eight participants, by the time I had interviewed them, they all had at least one undergraduate degree and five even had one or more graduate degrees.

Not everyone had attained their highest level of post-secondary education prior to entering the full-time workforce. Olivia completed a University certificate; Susan earned both her degrees while working full-time at another level of government; Megan started her Masters degree during maternity leave; Laurie completed her Masters after her first full-time CFPS job; Wanda completed her MBA prior to being an EX; and Grace spent approximately eleven years completing her college certificate and law degree while working in the CFPS. These findings highlight the value and importance that participants placed upon continuous learning throughout their working lives.

Many Canadians find themselves faced with having to juggle work and part-time studies in order to complete job-related education. According to Lindsay and Almey (2006), “in 2002, almost 2.5 million employed women, 37% of the total number of women with jobs, were participating in some kind of job-related education or training program” (p. 94) . In fact, this percentage was higher than that for men, which was 33%. Two participants, Wanda and Grace, made a point of describing how they coped with competing demands of job and schooling. Grace, knowing that her degree would be a long-term commitment, sought and received great support from her husband. Wanda who decided to do her MBA, chose to do it through distance learning because she didn’t “like being tied to a classroom” and preferred to “learn at [her] own pace”. At the same time, and similar to some participants in MacDonald and Thompson’s (2005) study, Wanda

had initial doubts about doing her program through e-learning rather than being in classroom, but it turned out to be “a really good program for [her]”. Her experience is also consistent with findings by Wyatt (2005) who found that many students enrolled in the university level e-learning course appreciated the flexibility offered by this delivery system and felt that they had received a high quality of education. At the same time, it is important to recall that balancing both full-time work and part-time studies was a demanding undertaking for Wanda since for two years she virtually had no personal life.

As a group, participants had degrees in diverse fields. Table 4 provides statistical data on the percentages of Canadian women who have obtained undergraduate degrees in the fields represented within the group as well as the percentages of Canadian women enrolled in Master’s degrees in the fields represented within the group. As shown in Table 4 perhaps the most noteworthy point to be made is that four of the five women who have reached the executive level have attained some or all of their formal education credentials in fields that tend to have fewer women in them (these academic fields have been marked with an asterisk).

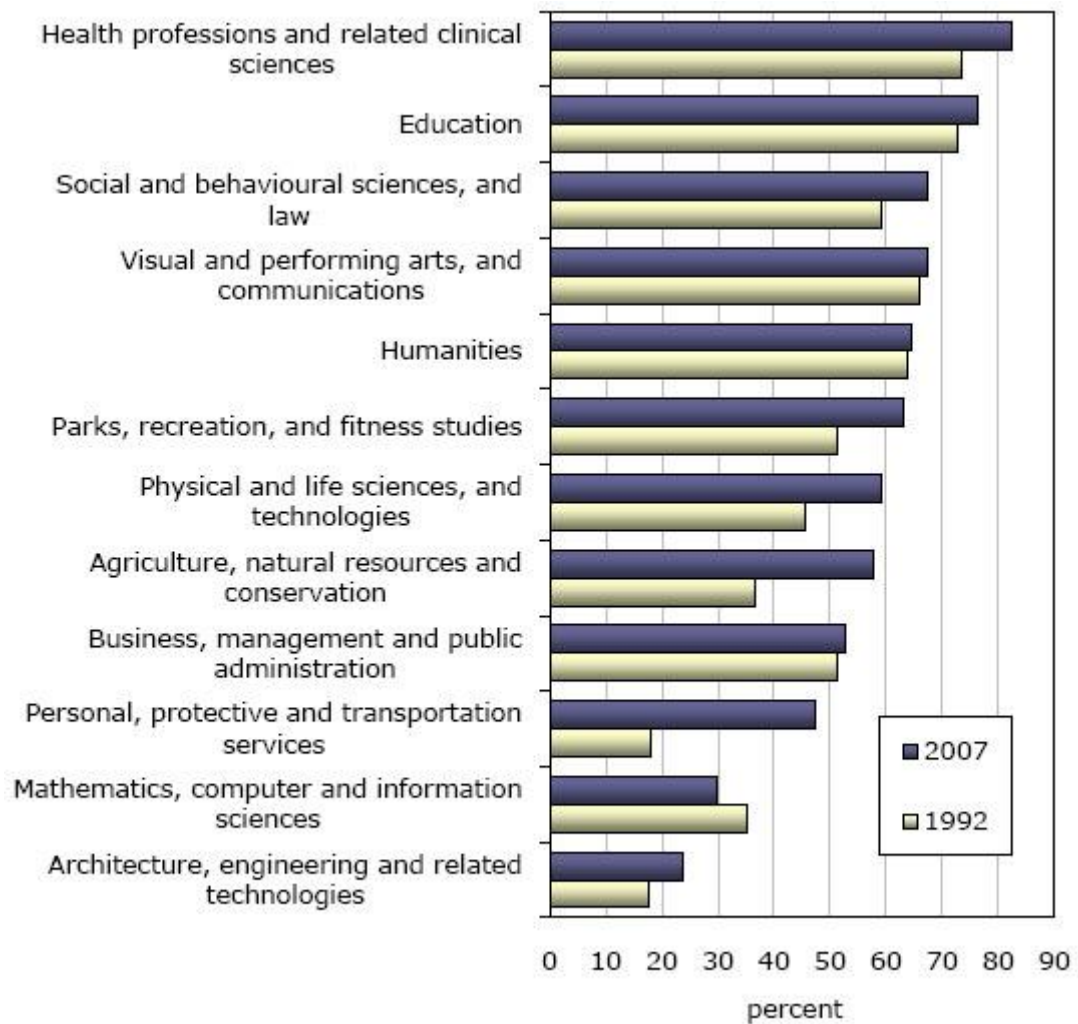
As shown in Table 5, McMullen, Gilmore and Le Petit (2006) provide further evidence that educational degrees in engineering, mathematics, protective services and business are among the most non-traditional fields for Canadian women. This pattern is true for 2007 and 1992. As already noted above, these four fields have helped shape the careers of four of the five EX-01’s. Moreover, the information in Table 4 and Table 5 helps clarify that no EX-minus-01 participants held degrees in fields that had the least percentage of women (See asterisks in Table 4). Of course, given the small sample in the present study, I am not suggesting that this possible link between non-traditional

education and women's career advancement into the EX one level is generalizable to the larger CFPS population. What this finding does suggest is that future research should investigate this possible relationship.

Table 4: Percentage of Canadian Women with Undergraduate Degrees and Percentage of Female Enrolment in Masters Programs in 2006-2007 within Participants' Fields of Study

Name	Field	Undergraduate Degree	Master's Enrolment
Ann (EX-01)	English Literature	72.2	
Megan (EX-minus-01)	Allied Health/Intervention and Treatment profession (physiotherapy) Health Medical Administration	75.3	56.5
Susan (EX minus 1)	Canadian History	50.8	49.6
Cate (EX-minus-01)	Journalism	Not Available	72.1
	Political Science	Not Available	47.6
Wanda (EX-01)	Commerce Masters in Business Administration	46.8	36.3*
Laurie (EX 01)	Mathematics	42.8*	
	Statistics		44.3*
Elizabeth (EX-01)	Chemical Engineering	36.7*	
Grace (EX-01)	Law	58.1	
	Protective ¹	31.8* ¹	

¹ Note: Grace's police certificate is college level; statistic provided is undergraduate degree. Source: CAUT Almanac of Post-Secondary Education 2009-2010

Table 5: Female Share of University Graduates, by Field of Study, 1992 and 2007

Note: From “Women in non-traditional occupations and field of study,” by K. McMullen, J. Gilmore and C. Le Petit, 2006. Copyright (2006) by Statistics Canada. With permission of the authors.

In terms of understanding how educational credentials have actually shaped participants’ careers, Bourdieu’s (1991) concepts of institutional cultural capital and social “field” are particularly helpful. According to Bourdieu, institutional cultural capital takes the form of educational academic qualifications, awards, professional certificates and credentials (see also Carrington & Luke, 1997). Institutional cultural capital is a

dynamic concept in that it is field-specific. A given credential may have more value in one context than in another. For example, Megan's degree in physiotherapy was valuable when she practised as a physiotherapist, but the credential had much less value when she entered the CFPS as an evaluator.

At entry into the CFPS, a number of participants noted how their specific credentials helped them secure their first jobs. Wanda's undergraduate degree qualified her to enter a specialized CFPS program in which incumbents needed a degree. Laurie was assured of her first CFPS job without having to undergo an external competitive process due in part because she was close to completing her Masters degree in Mathematics and Statistics. Elizabeth's engineering degree enabled her to join the CFPS as a scientist (ENG). Her degree coupled with her five years of experience in the private sector granted her a higher salary than she was even earning in the private sector. Susan was able to enter the CFPS from another level of government directly into an EX-minus-01 level, in part because she held a specialized masters degree that included Aboriginal studies, a domain that was particularly useful for her work in the North. Surprisingly, perhaps, Megan entered her first CFPS job because the hiring manager erroneously believed that her Masters in Health Administration was adequate preparation for a job in environmental impact studies. In these ways their institutional cultural capital helped them secure a CFPS job. When Cate was first hired into the CFPS, even though she had two masters degrees, she discovered after some time that a young man with only a bachelor's degree who had entered the organization at the same time was classified at a higher level and was making \$6,000 more than she was due to a misinterpretation of the staffing policies affecting the position in question. To use Bourdieu's concepts, the

“field” should have entitled her to a higher group and level as well as a salary more commensurate with her Masters degrees. After a year, Cate was able to negotiate a change in classification that reflected her credentials.

During their CFPS careers, Grace and Wanda acquired further formal education, Wanda an MBA and Grace a college police certificate later followed by a law degree. In both cases this education helped them acquire more “institutional cultural capital” (Bourdieu, 1997, 1984, 1991). Grace was encouraged by her boss to acquire further education; he evidently recognized the value of this type of institutional cultural capital within the department in which they worked. In Wanda’s case, additional education was not particularly valued by her immediate boss (her Director); however, his boss (Wanda’s Director General) was actually quite impressed and Wanda felt that this achievement helped leverage her, in his eyes, for future career progression. What is particularly notable in this case is that the DG, because of his higher rank, had more power and presumably more influence within the immediate social “field”. He was also the individual who most valued her degree. According to Corsen and Costen (2001) those who are dominant in a field “seek to manipulate...definitions of success and value, and the rewards attendant to the field in which they play” (p. 18). Wanda’s DG was in a position to define the value of her MBA. Literature on the value of having an MBA for career progression suggests that the degree can be particularly helpful to individuals in that it is known to be “the most notable advanced qualification in the management profession” (Baruch, 2009, p. 395). Moreover, Baruch argues that the degree helps advance individuals into managerial ranks, helps managers accelerate their career progressions, and enables career moves within or outside of their present organizations. It

appears then that obtaining an MBA is a particularly powerful strategy for building cultural capital with the view to advancing one's career.

The value of institutional cultural capital often shifts historically as well as according to the social field in which it is deployed. As Iellatchitch, Mayrhofer, and Meyer (2003) note, "fields are historically embedded social contexts, i.e. they change over time" (p. 732). What's more, "the power that capital provides depends on the structure of the field in which it is activated" (Sallaz & Zavisca, 2007, p. 24). An example provided by Cate demonstrates these points. In the 1980's when Cate was first hired at the CFPS she was told by a human resources consultant that it would be in her best interest to downplay her Masters degrees; today, however, she is in a job where having a masters has been a necessity for the policy analyst position she presently holds. Furthermore, she is now working with individuals who have PhD's and who she feels respect her and highly value her credentials.

In a similar vein at different points in her CFPS career, the value of Elizabeth's engineering credentials shifted according to her circumstances, according to the "field" in which she was working. In her first job in the CFPS as an engineer, she felt she had been misled regarding the nature of the job, since she ended up getting the "junior" position with the smallest program whereas the other two (male) engineers got the interesting projects. Elizabeth seems to imply that her credentials were not as valued as those of her male counterparts because of her gender. Kraiss' (1993) work would support her view in that she believes that "male domination tends to exclude women from positions of influence in most social fields" (p. 169). A little later in her career, however, Elizabeth was given the opportunity to serve as the scientific voice within a prestigious policy

environment with very senior level policy experts, in part due to her engineering degree. In yet another of her CFPS jobs, her degree was deemed good enough for her to serve as an Acting Director, but when it came time to post the position, she was unable to even apply because they required a specific scientific degree which she did not have. In her current position Elizabeth finds once again that her engineering undergraduate degree does not hold much value amongst scientists; virtually all of whom have PhD's. In fact, she even made the point that she would be taken much more seriously if she had a PhD in ANY discipline. In these ways one is able to see the shifting value of credentials (i.e., institutional cultural capital) according to the field in which it is being applied.

The concepts of “embodied cultural capital” and “habitus” (Bourdieu, 1986) are also useful in understanding how formal education helps individuals transform themselves into those who are better able to “play the game” of career advancement within the CFPS. Embodied cultural capital, it will be recalled, can be defined as various types of “knowledges, skills, dispositions, linguistic practices” and so forth (Carrington & Luke, 1997, p. 107) of one’s “habitus”. Habitus is “the way in which individuals ‘become themselves’ – [how they] develop attitudes and dispositions” (Webb, Schirato, & Danaher, 2002, p. xii). It is “embodied history, internalized as a second nature” (Bourdieu 1990, p. 56) which is incorporated into the individual. Wanda was particularly forthcoming in providing a sense of how one’s habitus can be transformed through acquiring further embodied cultural capital by acquiring formal education. Now that she has her MBA she feels that her business acumen has been enhanced, that she is less afraid and more confident when dealing with senior executives, that she presents herself more professionally, and that she is better able to deal with difficult people. Moreover she has

noticed a “phenomenal” difference between her writing skills – for example writing briefing notes – pre-MBA and post-MBA. Literature related to the value of MBA supports Wanda’s experience. Baruch (2009) argues that an MBA may be particularly helpful for middle managers and that the degree “enhances self-confidence, self-esteem and self-efficacy” (p. 397). In a Canadian survey study of male and female MBA graduates, Simpson, Sturges, Woods, and Altman (2005) found that their MBA enhanced the ability of both genders to more confidently deal with bosses. Whereas men derived their confidence from improved leadership skills and from developing trust in team members, women, in contrast, derived their confidence more from “a feeling of achievement; a feeling of greater self-worth...[a stronger] voice and a sense of empowerment” (239).

It appears that Wanda’s formal educational experience has shaped her sense of self-confidence and competence which has enabled her to feel that the EX level would be a good match between who she has become and the nature of the work. This notion of congruency also was particularly evident at times during Elizabeth’s and Laurie’s careers. Elizabeth was thrilled to be paid “just” for her scientific and engineering expertise in an exciting “almost magical” job working with high level policy experts. One of Laurie’s “greatest job[s]” was when she was able to use her education as a statistician, a time she described enthusiastically as “having fun...number crunching”. These examples highlight the power of a good match between one’s personal habitus (in part shaped by education) and the collective habitus that exists within a given field (i.e. one’s job) .

In stark contrast to the above examples, Ann attributes the “hardest 12 years of [her] life” working in a policy area in the CFPS to the fact that she had a “*measly*

[undergraduate] degree in English literature”. The collective habitus of this field was made up of individuals who had acquired embodied cultural capital that Ann clearly recognized, but did not have (Bourdieu, 1990). For example, her colleagues, who had Masters or Doctorates, were “very sophisticated and politically astute” due to having been brought up in political families and having studied history and political science for many years. As Ann explained, “EVERYTHING, every comma, every breath, every way [they] hold [their] body – every single thing – counts”. As for Ann, because her habitus was nothing like her colleagues’, she felt completely out of her element; to use her words, “Boy, did I struggle...I didn’t HAVE THE BACKGROUND; I just couldn’t compete with [these] people”.

Lives in Context

Impact of Long Hours on Personal Life

Despite the recognition of the importance of balancing work with personal lives (Higgins & Duxbury, 2002), today’s managers and executives are putting in long hours (Blair-Loy & Wharton, 2002; Wharton & Blair-Loy, 2006). For example, in a cross-national survey of 277 U.S., U.K. and Hong Kong managers and professionals, working in International Finance, Wharton and Blair-Loy found that the average respondent “works an average of 50 hours a week...[and]...he or she often comes in to work early or stays late” (p. 424). Similarly, in a study involving 519 American professionals and managers, the survey found that almost two-thirds of respondents often worked late; and a vast majority of respondents agreed that they often came in early or stayed late. Of a small sub-sample of participants who were also interviewed, the most common comment

was that they worked long hours under intense work pressure (Blair-Loy & Wharton, 2002).

The trend to work long hours has also increased in recent years. Duxbury and Higgins' 2001 large-scale Canadian study of 31,571 respondents of whom almost half were public service employees and more than half held managerial and professional positions, found that one in four respondents worked 50 or more hours per week, in contrast to a similar study by the authors conducted in 1991, which found that only one in 10 respondents did so. (Duxbury & Higgins, March 2002). Once participants reached either EX-minus-01 or EX-01 levels, it became very clear to them that working long hours was the norm. At these levels, it was not unusual for their work life to invade their personal life. For example, Wanda struggled to find time to get to the gym during her lunch hours; she also tried not to work weekends but was not always successful doing so. Ann put work before leisure and family which, in turn, affected her personal relationships and her health. Cate would receive e-mails from her boss late at night; Wanda and Grace both kept their blackberries on during weekends in the event that their bosses needed to reach them. One participant even mentioned that job postings for EX competitive processes sometimes now require 24/7 availability.

Although the majority of participants generally accepted working long hours, several did make a point of stressing that they aimed to achieve work-life balance, especially at this point in their lives. Laurie, an EX-01, tried to balance her work life by coming in late since she had to work late. Olivia, now working long hours in the Minister's office, is pulled towards wanting the EX-01 yet she doesn't seem willing to work the even longer hours that she knows would be required. Megan seems to have

totally given up her aspirations to be an EX, and now values flexibility in having several months off in the winter. At the time of the interviews, Grace was ambivalent about the longer time commitment that would be required at the EX-01 level and she was adamant about protecting her personal work/life balance; nevertheless, several months later, she applied for and won an EX-01 competition, which she accepted. Hence, participants knew that giving up personal time to the organization was a tacit requirement to advance in their careers.

Technology seemed to exacerbate intrusion into participants' personal lives, a phenomenon that has been recently highlighted in a report "Caught in a Time Crunch" by the Canadian Index of Wellbeing that examined time use, leisure and culture trends of Canadians over the past two decades (CIW, 2010). That said, the remarks of several participants suggest that they themselves were also caught up in the practice and the need to use technology to expand their workdays. For example, Grace felt that she needed to be on call even on holidays so her replacement could reach her. Ann herself would send e-mails late into the evening and thought nothing of it, until her staff complained to her boss. Current literature supports these findings. For example, in an exploratory qualitative study of Australian middle managers, Parris, Vickers and Wilkes (2008) found that not only did new technologies create a major and frustrating encroachment on participants' personal lives but participants also seemed to accept this encroachment as a normal part of their managerial role.

Overall, if the findings are any indication, it seems reasonable to believe that work infringement into personal lives will not change any time soon for those who are or who

aspire to careers as middle managers and executives in the CFPS. It is the price one pays for advancement.

The Influence of Children on Career Development and Advancement

Of the ten participants in the present study, three had no children. Grace was particularly forthcoming about her childlessness in relation to her career. Early on in her career, Grace made the decision to remain childless, what Park (2005) refers to as an “early articulator” (p. 374). The decision to not have children is becoming more commonplace (Gillespie, 1999, 2001, 2003; Park, 2005). Although being voluntarily childless is in general still relatively unusual, it is more common amongst women in professional and managerial occupations (Park, 2005). Hewlett (2002) notes that “At midlife, between a third and a half of all successful career women in the United States do not have children” (p. 66); and 42 percent of professional women in corporate America between the ages of 41 and 55 are childless with the figure rising. However, Hewlett notes that these women do not always want to be childless – many are simply victims of “creeping nonchoice” (p. 66) – they have waited too long, many due to the “brutal demands of ambitious careers” (p. 67) because Hewlett found that organizations are not supportive of highly educated women who start families. Similarly, in a qualitative comparative case-study of two groups of American women – 56 executive women working in the finance field and 25 business career women who left their jobs when they had children – Blair-Loy (2003) found that almost two-thirds of the first (career-committed) group within her study dealt with competing devotions to career and to family by not having children.

For Grace, being a mother and having a career were mutually exclusive, a view expressed by many childless women (Gillespie, 2001; Kelly, 2009). She was influenced in her decision by two different parenting models: her mother's approach and those of her colleagues. Grace appreciated that her mother stayed at home with her and her sibling; and if she were to have children, she too would have stayed home with them. As for her colleagues, Grace admired women who juggled family and job, yet she saw how much new mothers struggled emotionally when they had to return to work and put their child in daycare. In a similar vein, Park (2005) found that particularly female respondents' decisions to not have children were influenced by different parenting models that they encountered throughout their lives. Notably, Grace described her choice to remain childless as "selfish", recognizing her mother's "sacrifice" in staying home for her children and her colleagues' courage in their attempts to balance motherhood and career. Literature on motherhood has highlighted the subtle yet strong pronatalist ideology that still pervades our culture (Gillespie, 2001; Kelly, 2009; Park, 2002, 2005). Feminine identity still remains strongly tied to having children; and women who choose not to have children are still seen as being selfish and even deviant (Gillespie, 2001). Grace appears to be sensitive to this cultural norm when describing her choice yet she seems comfortable in her decision and has no regrets. As younger cohorts of women opt out of motherhood (Kelly, 2009), women such as Grace may not be made to feel "selfish" regarding their choice due to greater social acceptability.

The experience of pregnancy also helped shape some participants' careers. Cate became pregnant later on in life and, despite pressure from her (male) boss and (male) client, was reluctant to fly up North to meet with the CFPS client. Her boss suggested that

she take the entire time of her pregnancy off but Cate feared that she would lose her present job which she valued and did not take him up on his offer. In fact, during her year of maternity leave, she felt that being away for so long “set [her] back” and she felt like “a new employee” due to a change in management during her absence.

Notably, two of the women used their pregnancies as a kind of career development strategy. Soon after the birth of Megan’s daughter, and wanting to change career direction, she began a Masters degree in Health Administration since she also had a good baby and a mother’s helper. Eventually her degree helped get her into the CFPS. Remarkably, Elizabeth used at least three of her four pregnancies as a definitive opportunity to move into more desirable positions. In these cases she would actually announce her intentions to her colleagues. This career strategy contradicts literature that suggests how pregnancy can negatively impact one’s career. During Elizabeth’s second pregnancy in private industry, however, this sense of control over her life and career temporarily collapsed when she not only lost the baby halfway through her pregnancy but was also laid off two weeks later by her new manager. The miscarriage was “easily the most important thing [she] ever had to deal with”. As for her career, she felt that her new manager saw her as an expensive employee as well as “that woman who had just had a miscarriage” and who wanted more children. Although Elizabeth was redirected to possible other jobs within the organization, she instead applied to the CFPS, was offered a job there with a considerable salary increase and good maternity benefits, and happily accepted the offer. If the findings of the present study are any indication, time off to have a child can at least temporarily derail women’s career advancement. That said, it might be possible to use pregnancy as a kind of “self-initiated turning point” in one’s career

decision-making (Hodkinson & Sparkes, 1997, p. 39). Perhaps, some women who aspire to executive level jobs might be able to use the opportunity to change career direction as Megan and Elizabeth did. By adopting a kind of “self-employed model” wherein “women are no longer acting as employees working according to the mandates of their employer, but rather as ‘career self-agents’, they can effectively set their own terms of employment” (Shapiro, Ingols & Blake-Beard, 2008, p. 310). This latter career perspective is consistent with the idea that personal values and certain life circumstances are resulting in women creating their own “customized careers” (Valcour, Bailyn & Quijada, 2007).

In terms of work-family issues more generally, extensive research has been conducted (Duxbury & Higgins, 2003; 2005; 2008; Duxbury, Higgins, & Coghill 2003; Higgins, Duxbury, & Johnson, 2004; Higgins & Duxbury, 2002; Pitt-Catsoupes, Kossek, & Sweet, 2006), although little prior research has linked work-family issues more specifically to career advancement (Lyness & Judiesch, 2008). Much career-related research has concentrated on the tensions between work and family and struggles to find work-life balance. Stories of participants in the present study suggest similar tensions. Of the seven women who had children, five of them – Ann, Becky, Cate, Megan and Susan – waited until their late 20’s or 30’s to start having children, what Park (2005) calls “postponers”. Ann was clear about her desire for a career rather than choosing to be a stay-at-home mother. Susan waited until she had job security before having her child.

The CFPS, in an effort to brand itself as an “Employer of Choice”, makes a point of stressing that it understands the importance of balancing work and home lives. The organization states, for example that “the public service offers the possibility to work

flexible hours, a compressed work week as well as alternative work arrangements such as telework” (Public Service Commission of Canada, 2008a).

That said, in the present study two of the participants who currently had young children sensed that there were career ramifications attached to using such policies. Both Cate and Elizabeth – who at the time were EX-minus-01 – attempted at times to manage their work hours around their family responsibilities by starting early or late and minimizing unanticipated overtime. Cate, a single mother, arranged to arrive at 8:30 a.m. so she could walk her young son to school; and she resisted demands to stay late when it became a regular occurrence. Elizabeth, a mother of two, and eventually three, small children, negotiated an early start, with a set departure time with two different bosses. Given the CFPS position on family-friendly policies, the womens’ family circumstances, and studies demonstrating positive outcomes of these policies for both employees and employers (e.g., lower stress levels, increased productivity and commitment, attraction and retention of desirable employees as noted in Halpern, 2005 as well as Perrone, Wright, and Jackson, 2009), these requests for accommodation do not appear to me to be particularly unreasonable, even for individuals aspiring to executive levels. Both women, however, suspected that that these accommodations negatively affected their careers. Notably, in one case, when Elizabeth recognized the potential harm to her career, she knew she needed to leave that job and soon did so. Many organizations attempt to offer family-friendly policies, however studies have also shown that “many professional employees are reluctant to use these policies out of fear for their career advancement” (Blair-Loy, 2003, p. 197). Further to this point, the idea of an employee individually negotiating flexible arrangements, as suggested by Perrone et al., seems particularly

unrealistic to me, at least for those aspiring to advance in their careers. As for the CFPS, if the findings of the present study are any indication, it would appear that if the organization hopes to recruit and retain promising women, more effort should be spent in practising the use of family-friendly policies. In a study by Duxbury and Higgins (2005) of Canada's largest employers (including the CFPS), the authors reiterate this point in distinguishing between "having family-friendly policies (i.e. formal arrangements that are provided)...and actually being 'family-friendly' (i.e. the supportive attitude of supervisors and colleagues towards the use of these arrangements)" (p. 37). In 2005 more than half the separations from the CFPS were by women (Public Service Human Resources Management Agency of Canada, 2005). Although the reasons for these separations are unknown, it is possible that at least some could be attributed to the lack of flexibility in accessing family-friendly policies. Shapiro, Ingols, Blake-Beard and O'Neill (2009) contend that because organizations are not addressing these types of issues, women are rejecting the "conventional [the] work-is primary career model" (p. 53) and instead women are taking charge of their own careers.

Few participants still had young children at home when they had reached middle management levels, which might account for the relative absence of details regarding the impact of children on their careers. Cate and Elizabeth were the only mothers with young children still at home. Cate, at the time of the interviews was a single mother with a young son. Her lone parent status created its own special challenges when it came to balancing care-giving with work (for example, coming in early, working overtime and weekends). In a study comparing U.K. and U.S. lone parents (both male and female), Coyne (2002) argues that lone parents face challenges that adversely impact their careers,

particularly in the U.K., and that care-giving responsibilities may be the “*glass ceiling* of the new millennium” for both genders (p. 447).

Of all the mothers in the study, Elizabeth, with three young children when she was rising toward executive level, provides the most comprehensive story of a woman’s struggles to build her career while also trying to have a family. Her reflections are particularly noteworthy, which are likely due to her having several young children at a demanding time in her career. These reflections capture some of the behind the scenes tensions that a woman may face and some of the methods she might use to simultaneously fulfill her desire to have several children and still do what is necessary to advance toward the executive level. Little is known about how women balance and struggle when they have young children at home. One participant in a study by Ezzedeen and Ritchey (2009) claimed that there are relatively few women executives with young children whose stories are actually told – when asked they tend to say they “just manage”. Although the participant in the Ezzeden and Richey (2009) study said that she realizes that this might be different for everyone – she would actually “like to know more specifically what...you just do... means” (p. 270). The present study highlights what some of those things that women ‘just do’ are. For example, when Elizabeth was invited to be the scientific voice on a newly created prestigious high visibility policy-making team which turned out to be the most stimulating “magical... it was ALMOST dangerous because it was such a DRUG” job of her CFPS career, she “didn’t care at all” about regularly staying on for after-hours meetings, although she’s quite certain that her husband would not speak “so wonderfully” about the time she spent in that job. When on maternity leave after the birth of her third child, she was given the rare chance to try out

for CAP. In order to prepare for the challenging set of exams, she temporarily withdrew from family responsibilities by sequestering herself in a local hotel. She succeeded, and upon her return to work, she entered this very selective CAP. At another time, when she sensed she had no choice career-wise but to accept a one-year position that would require her to fly out of town each week in order to spend Monday with her out-of-town staff, after a night of soul searching with her husband, she accepted the offer. It appears that her out-of-town routine worked as well as it did mainly because of her ability to organize her travel time; “I had it timed to the MINUTE”, as she put it. When six months into her commitment, her son was showing troubling signs of distress in school, his teacher attributed Elizabeth’s routine absence from home as the explanation. Elizabeth saw this as a wake up call claiming that “having a stranger tell me what was going on in my house was kinda like OKAY, I needed to be hit on top of the head before I saw it”. In these key examples, we see not only her struggle to balance “competing devotions” a concept considered by Ezzedeen and Ritchie (2009, p. 272) as a stressful aspect of working women, but also her carefully implemented strategies that served to protect, and grow, her developing career. Maternal cultural ideology on the concept of good mothering of children was found in a study by Baker (2010) involving three groups of women (married women wanting children, academic mothers, and single mothers) to be “largely women’s work either by choice or by default, leaving mothers with less time and energy to pursue their paid work” (p. 223). Moreover, numerous researchers from various countries confirm that it is normally mothers who accept most responsibility for child care and housework, even though they work full-time (Craig & Bittman, 2008; Craig, 2006; Edlund, 2007; Kitterød & Pettersen, 2006).

Importantly, in my view when Elizabeth framed the situation as “I can but my family can’t”, she does not take it upon herself to blame herself for not being able to do the job, but simply conveys to her boss that the extensive travelling no longer works for her family and externalizes the situation. Rather than focusing on the conflict between her home and career, Elizabeth offers a positive spin on what has typically been framed as ‘conflict’ and her career life story tends to also support the other view that careers can be viewed through the lens of an “enrichment argument” (Lyness & Judiesch, 2008, p. 790). Several theorists consider that the benefits of having multiple roles far outweighs stresses and costs that multiple roles incur (Rothbard, 2001; Sieber, 1974). This view of “expansionism”, which purports that multiple roles may be advantageous as one role enhances the others, notes the positive experiences of cross-role energy transfer, positive work and home experiences, and the acquisition of social contacts (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Sieber, 1974) which may be linked to career advancement strategies. Moreover, research has shown that attributes such as those of planning, being efficient, the ability to organize and to be responsible and achievement-oriented (Judge, Higgins, Thoresen, & Barrick, 1999), such as how Elizabeth managed both her family and career life, can also be positively linked to job performance (Hurtz & Donovan, 2000). A study by Lyness and Judiesch (2008) involving 10,943 managers in 33 countries with 25% of women from the U.S., found that there was a positive “balance-advancement” relationship even in high pressure environments. Moreover, the concept of “conscientiousness” is believed to enable the facilitation of work-life balance leading to positive relationship predictions. Lyness and Judiesch (2008) found that those who were better able to manage work and life tended to do well in the career advancement domain and found a positive relationship

“between work-life balance and career advancement” (p. 791). Invoking the enrichment perspective of working and balancing work and non-work lives suggests that workers have learned important administrative and social skills which may assist in their being able to better manage heavy demands of executive positions. Elizabeth’s experiences in balancing parenting and her career appears to support the findings of the above-mentioned study. Elizabeth revelled in and thrived on a fast-paced, heavy demand work environment and “didn’t care at all”; particularly if it was exciting to her. She exercised a great deal of ingenuity in renting a hotel room to study, away from the children and having her husband bring her new baby to be breastfed; she became an ‘expert’ in managing her time through the airport for her out-of-town travel; and most importantly, she did not undermine her sense of self by blaming herself and feeling guilty for ‘not being there’ but considered that it was her family who couldn’t cope without her. Elizabeth’s case may shed some light as to why Higgins and Duxbury (2002) found considerable support for work-interferes-with-family but little support for family-interferes-with work. When choices between work and family need to be made, workers tend to choose work.

Partner Support for Participants’ Careers

Of the nine participants who had partners at some point during their careers, six commented about the kind and extent of partner support they received. Grace and Olivia, neither of whom had children, credited their partners for helping them with emotional and career supportive behaviours. For example, Grace’s husband was very supportive throughout her many years of university education while working; and Olivia’s husband believed in her and admired her when she got her promotions. In a qualitative study of 20

senior and executive level women, Ezzedeen and Ritchey (2008) found that emotional (encouragement and understanding) and esteem (respect and validation) support were the most valued forms of spousal support identified by participants. Partner career support for their advancement – for example, not complaining about their busy schedules – was cited as the fourth most important form of support. Wanda has no children. In contrast to Grace and Olivia, Wanda's partner seems to resent the long hours necessary in her current position as an EX-01 despite having initially voiced her support for the promotion. Wanda also does the "preponderance of the housework", which has caused tension between them. Research by Ezzedeen and Ritchie also supports Wanda's experience. For example, several of their participants in that study said that they would be supportive, but when it really came down to it, they did not fulfil their commitment. Furthermore, the authors found that the first-ranking unsupportive behaviour of all the categories was insufficient help with household chores.

Becky, who did have a child, spoke of her husband's contribution in helping her balance her career and home life. Earlier on in her career, her husband worked for long periods of time away from home and so she was alone to care for her small child. However, once he became disabled and was no longer able to work, he became the main caregiver and housekeeper for the family. Her husband was also emotionally supportive of her career and proud of her accomplishments. In these ways he made a clear positive difference in Becky's career success (Ezzedeen & Richey, 2008).

Ann and Elizabeth's spousal support experiences highlight possible historical and ideological differences in the roles partners can play in a woman's career. Ann's child was born in the early 1980's whereas Elizabeth's children were born from the mid 1990's

and beyond. In spite of both husbands working in professional jobs with regular 9 to 5 hours and with no overtime, they differed radically in their views of and support for their wives' careers. Although Ann's husband did not care whether she worked or not, he still expected her to do all the regular housework and childcare duties and resented her working long hours in her job. This tension seems to have been a major factor in their divorce. Elizabeth's husband, in contrast, seems to have taken on a very active role in helping with the household chores and childcare. For example, his regular hours permitted him to arrive home early and begin dinner for the family during times when she was obliged to work late. She considered him "the steady person at home" who seldom travelled. He often planned, organized, shopped for groceries, and cleaned. Bartley et al. (2005) consider these types of activities as "low control tasks" which they define as those that "must be done on a daily basis at specific times leaving [individuals] with little or no personal control" (p. 77). In families, these types of tasks tend to be "female" jobs, which the authors found tended to increase feelings of unfairness or inequity on the part of female respondents, all of whom held jobs outside the home. In Elizabeth's case there seemed to be a more equitable division of low control tasks. Elizabeth's husband also played a child-nurturing role; he even baked cookies. Recent research evidence supports this finding; for example, Doucet (2004a, 2004b) found that "fathers can also be nurturing, affectionate, responsive and active with their children" (p. 105). Elizabeth's case seems to aptly illustrate that "it matters whom you marry" (Ezzedeen & Ritchey, 2009)!

At one point in her career Elizabeth was earning more money and had more flexibility to leave work for child-related events, so they decided that her husband would

turn down a lucrative job to another city, which triggered a year of unemployment for him. During that year it appears that he assumed a great deal of the family responsibilities. Over the years, Elizabeth has also enjoyed great emotional support from her husband and feels they have good communication between each other, which she attributes in part to the fact that they have been together since they were teenagers. According to Neault (2005), one coping strategy of many dual-earner couples is to emphasize one partner's career over the other's for a certain period of time. Typically, it is the husband's career that takes precedence (Bartley et al., 2005; Ezzedeen & Ritchey, 2008; Sweet & Moen, 2006), in part because of an entrenched and longstanding belief in the breadwinner/homemaker "model" for men and women respectively. Ann's husband seemed to adopt this stance despite Ann's desire to pursue a career. For Elizabeth and her husband, the breadwinner/homemaker model was turned on its head when they decided to put his career on hold while she pursued hers. However, this decision had negative consequences; he suffered a severe anxiety attack almost to the day that his severance pay ran out during his period of unemployment. Although Elizabeth doesn't say so directly, it is plausible that at least some of his stress was related to his perceived inability to be the family's breadwinner, a cultural value that continues to define fatherhood and masculinity (Wharton, 2006). Elizabeth's case, in particular, showcases the behind-the-scenes struggles and compromises as well as strategies that couples experience in their attempts to support a women's career progression.

Research Question 2:

How have organizational factors influenced career development and advancement of women in the CFPS towards and into the EX-minus-01 and EX-01 levels

Culture of Long Hours

As noted earlier, literature suggests that working long hours is the norm for managers and professionals (Blair-Loy & Wharton, 2002; Wharton & Blair-Loy, 2006) (see Impact of Long Hours on Personal Life). One reason why long hours may be required is that fewer workers are expected to do more. Donner (1999) suggests that the “survivors” of downsizing and reorganization bear a heavier workload as a result of work being “compacted” – fewer employees are being asked to do more resulting in their having to work longer and harder. Similarly, in Duxbury and Higgins’ 2002 report on some of Canada’s largest employers, the authors described these employers as “anorexic” in the sense that there are “not enough employees to do the work and [not enough] managers to strategize and plan” (Higgins & Duxbury, p. 54). In the present study, when Wanda reached the EX-one-level, she soon discovered this phenomenon; she found herself working extremely long hours due in part to having to manage more programs with funding that has not increased in ten years, and having 10 fewer staff members to do the work.

Wharton and Blair-Loy (2006) provide other reasons why long hours may be required, namely “respond[ing] to unpredictable events, deal[ing] with change, and work[ing] under tight deadlines” (p. 424). In the CFPS those who work in “policy” are generally expected to respond to urgent Ministerial requests within a very short

turnaround time. Elizabeth inadvertently attempted to transgress the norm of long hours at the end of her workday by negotiating a fixed 4:00 p.m. departure time. However, her future boss looked at her like she had “four eyes” and said, “NO! Policy doesn’t work like that; nobody works [only] till 4:00 here”. Elizabeth thought she had resolved the problem by negotiating a 4:30 p.m. departure each day, yet her boss would often schedule meetings at 5:00 p.m. when she knew Elizabeth could not attend. The nature of the work, in the boss’s eyes, could not accommodate Elizabeth’s working hours, and Elizabeth soon realized that she needed to leave that workplace. Another example of needing to be accessible on short notice outside working hours was Wanda’s case in which her Director General may have needed to consult with her about unforeseen departmental urgencies so she kept her blackberry activated on weekends in the event that something were to “explode”.

As shown above with Wanda, technology reinforced and even extended the organizational norm of long hours when participants reached EX-minus-01 and EX-01 levels. In a similar vein, Cate’s boss expected her to read her e-mails late in the evening in order to arrive earlier than her normal start time for an unexpected meeting. When Grace reached the EX-minus-01 level and was assigned a blackberry, she thought it was the “cat’s meow”; now that she finds herself “always on call”, she sometimes feels like she would “love to take it and throw it against the wall”. In an analysis of 5,000 written comments which formed part of a larger 2001 study on Canadian National Work-Life Conflict, Duxbury et al. (2003) found that approximately 500 comments dealt with the problem of heavy workloads, technology being one of the six major themes identified. As one survey participant wrote (Duxbury & Higgins, 2008), “Electronic tools have

increased the expectations of availability - anytime anywhere, immediate answers expected. After hours, - during business travel - Sunday and Friday nights - you are now expected to use this time to return voice mail and e-mails” (p. 55).

The culture of long hours for management is so ingrained into the CFPS culture that it is synonymous with ambition. Early on in her CFPS career, when Elizabeth attempted to defend her high career aspirations despite not being able to stay late, her younger boss could not grasp this seeming contradiction. Similarly, Cate who had negotiated a start time of 8:30 a.m. felt there might be hidden repercussions career-wise of not being available earlier in the day. The belief that working long hours demonstrates high ambition is not limited to the CFPS (Beauregard & Henry, 2009; Blair-Loy & Wharton, 2002; Peus & Trout-Mattausch, 2008). For example, in a cross-cultural comparison of German and U.S. upper middle managers in diverse industries, Peus and Trout-Mattausch (2008) found that for women in both samples, the major barrier to their career advancement was that “in many organizations promotions were largely dependent on the number of hours spent in the organization and not on actual performance” (p. 565). In a similar vein, in an on-line interactive question and answer forum with Professor Chris Higgins (Galt, 2007), when asked whether people can work “reasonable hours and take advantage of flexible work arrangements”, he replied, “...if you are not willing to work 50-60 hours per week you are not likely to get the promotions and better paying jobs – that’s the cost” (p. 3) which is consistent with Blair-Loy and Wharton’s respondents who believed that “consistently spending long hours at work would have a positive effect on career progress” (2002, p. 828).

In sum, it appears from the findings of this study that the nature of the work of middle managers and entry level executives helps sustain a culture of long hours, and technology reinforces this norm. In turn, long hours has become synonymous with ambition, and is, therefore, the price one needs to pay to advance in one's career.

Organizational Support for Formal and Non-formal Learning

The organization helped support the three participants (Grace, Wanda and Olivia) who pursued formal education. This support took the form of actual money, leave with partial pay, and/or flextime to be able to attend class during work hours. Participants were not automatically entitled to these forms of supports, however; these needed to be individually negotiated with one's supervisor and seemed to depend heavily on the perceived value of the individual's immediate work needs. Perceived value was demonstrated in Grace's case; her law courses were considered pertinent to her current work on writing security legislation, yet her Women's Studies course was not.

At the start of their CFPS careers, three participants, all of whom are now at the EX-01 level, benefitted from various recruitment and retention initiatives by the organization. Laurie benefitted from both a summer placement program and a bridging mechanism, which she believed were pivotal in her joining the organization. Wanda and Ann were selected to receive quite extensive specialized training. Wanda learned to use a restricted firearm and Ann was part of an initiative to help well-educated women escape the CFPS "pink ghetto" by learning how to conduct organizational level analyses. These findings suggest that there may have been long-term career benefits to those who were provided with important early learning interventions within the organization. Future research could explore this possible relationship.

The organization provided other professional development opportunities that helped participants gain specific knowledge that proved useful to their current jobs; everybody received mandatory training to obtain delegation of authority, Becky learned 15 financial systems, Grace got assertiveness training, and Susan received training for the job she was in up North. Of course, some skills learned seemed clearly transferable to other future jobs and is useful for career advancement. For example, Becky's cumulative knowledge permits her to use 15 computerized financial systems.

Grace, Laurie, and Elizabeth all received professional development that helped position them to successfully compete for entry level executive jobs. Grace's assertiveness training has helped her as a woman to have more of a voice. She and Laurie also received a little coaching from the Personnel Psychology Centre in preparation for EX competitions. Elizabeth by far had the most extensive professional develop support through the CAP program, which provided her with years of support.

Second language training was a special case in point because the CFPS usually requires certain proficiency levels (e.g., BBB, CBC) for different jobs, especially as one progresses to higher levels (Barresi De Sousa, 2008). Participants understood that bilingualism was a valuable commodity for their career advancement toward and into the executive level. In Bourdieuan terms, they knew they needed to acquire institutional cultural (linguistic) capital in the form of an official linguistic profile that was required to enter the executive "field".

A key point is that one is not automatically entitled to language training if a position is deemed English Essential or if the individual already has the required profile for the job. For career advancement purposes, the problem arises when their profile

expires or the hoped for job requires a higher level of proficiency. Superiors, however, can agree to language training at their discretion; and several participants were successful in negotiating this support. Cate received French language training to maintain her B levels, and Wanda negotiated training to obtain CBC level which she felt was required if she were to advance further in her career. Not all negotiations for language training were successful. Ann had difficulty at first obtaining French since she seemed indispensable and was brought back to the organization due to operational requirements. Cate's later attempt to negotiate French training to bring her up to C levels failed, as did Susan's who has been trying for several years to obtain French for the first time to help her advance in her career. These failed attempts are understandable; language training requires significant time away from the office. Literature suggests that training by organizations is usually of a short duration since "workers are not necessarily replaced, and part of their work is carried out by their colleagues in addition to their usual tasks" (Havet & Sofer, 2008, p. 296). Moreover, an organization's investment in an individual's non-required language training positions that individual to leave.

In sum, the organization provided support for formal university education, early career learning, current job needs, executive competition preparation, and second language training.

Table 6 summarizes these various forms of support for the ten participants. As indicated, all participants received some form of professional development. That said, it is noteworthy that, as a group, the five participants who are now at the executive level appear to have particularly benefited from forms of organizational support that have likely contributed to their career success.

Table 6: Forms of Organizational Support for Learning Mentioned by Participants

Name	Formal Education	Early Entry	Learning and Training Required For Current Work	Negotiated SLT (discretionary)	Training Specific To EX
EX-01's¹			X		
Ann		X	X	X	
Elizabeth			X	*	X
Grace	X		X	?	X
Laurie		X	X	?	X
Wanda	X	X	X	X	
EX-minus-01's					
Becky			X	*	
Cate			X	X	
Olivia	X		X	*	
Megan			X	?	
Susan				**	

1 Executives are presumed to have the required CBC levels

* Bilingual through being raised in bilingual environment – levels unknown

** Known to have not been successful in receiving SLT

? Has bilingual profile commensurate with current role, but unknown if discretionary organizational support has been negotiated

The Importance of Organizational Networks

According to Bourdieu (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), social capital is the sum of the resources acquired by an individual or group through possessing a “durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition” (p. 119). Social capital is found within the structure and content of an individual’s social relationships; and it is accessible through the flow of information, influence and solidarity available to the individual (Fenney & Bozeman, 2008). Organizational networks, one form of social networks, were particularly relevant to participants’ career development and advancement.

Literature has documented that the development and use of organizational networks is an important career advancement strategy (Forret & Dougherty, 2001, 2004; Lin, 2000; Wang, 2009a). “Better connected people enjoy higher returns” (Burt, 2000, p. 348). Many participants made a point of stressing that developing one’s network was important in helping them advance in their careers. For example, Laurie and Wanda both ranked it at the top of the list. Grace said how she regularly turned to her network to find other jobs. Elizabeth has used her CAP network extensively for many different reasons.

Evidence on the value of networks suggests that women benefit less than men. In organizations, women tend to be excluded from influential male social networks which negatively impacts upon their career advancement to senior management levels (Metz & Tharanou, 2001). In a similar vein, Forret and Dougherty (2004) note that men tend to “occupy more central positions in organizational networks and are perceived to be more influential, instrumental, and powerful than women” (p. 423). Lin (2000) speculates that

men may tend to have networks in which they have access to “*routine exchanges...without actively seeking such information*”, what he refers to as “*the invisible hand of social capital*” (p. 792, emphasis in original). It is therefore particularly important for women to cultivate networks that cross gender lines. Wanda appears to have insight into this phenomenon; she makes a point to say that women need more support and, in particular, they need to do cross-gender networking. Wanda herself has had, with one exception, male bosses throughout her career; this may have made it somewhat easier for her to cultivate cross-gender ties. Although the evidence is less obvious for other participants in this study one senses that Elizabeth, Grace and Laurie may have also been able to nurture cross-gender ties, given their repeated use of masculine pronouns in referring to other colleagues, particularly superiors.

Organizational networks take time and effort to establish and nurture. They are “the product of investment strategies...which implies expenditure of time and energy” (Bourdieu, 1991, pp. 248, 250). In the present study, Laurie noted, for example, that one does not develop networks through artificial means but rather through being on working groups over time where others recognize and respect your work and they “pass your name on and tell you about other [job opportunities]”. Wanda’s networks run deep, having been in the same department for 18 years. She has developed and maintained her networks over time by making a point of meeting with former colleagues and regional contacts when they come to Ottawa. Both Wanda and Laurie are now at the executive level; it is likely that their networks have in some way contributed to their advancement. Susan, for her part, feels that her advancement has been stymied since she is relatively new to Ottawa and has not had the opportunity to build her networks.

Organizational networks have been studied in terms of the respective value of strong and weak ties, and the implications of these types of ties for individuals' careers. Enns, Malinick and Matthews (2008) define strong ties as "ties to those people within an individual's immediate social network, such as family and close friends", whereas weak ties are "ties to people who are not within [the individual's] immediate social network, such as acquaintances, coworkers, and friends of close friends" (p. 257).

Research over the past three decades suggest that weak ties may be more beneficial for career advancement than strong ties (Burt, 1997, 2000; Enns et al., 2008; Granovetter, 1973; Wang, 2009a). Networks made up of weak ties tend to be more diverse with a greater number of individuals who can provide greater access to new information (Enns et. al, 2008) Wang notes that women's networks compared to men's tend to be based on strong ties, which may disadvantage them. In the present study, however, the women's networks appear to have been made up of a great number of weak ties. For example, Grace often turned to former colleagues for help in finding other jobs. Someone recognized Laurie's name on a job application, and the individual called her to offer her the job prior to the competition being completed. Becky got one of her jobs because a former co-worker had submitted Becky's resume without her knowledge. Cate's former Director circulated her resume for a job which resulted in Cate being offered two jobs.

Strong ties are believed to be less effective because individuals, being strongly connected to each other, tend to share the same redundant information (Burt,1997). Strong ties, however, do appear to be more beneficial to individuals in acquiring their first jobs because individuals lack organizational networks (Parks-Yancy, DiTomaso, & Post, 2006). This benefit was true for Grace and Olivia who both got their first CFPS jobs

through their strong ties (their mothers). It should be noted, however, that at least two of the women also got jobs through strong ties later on in their careers: Laurie, through “a very good friend” and Becky through her sister. It may be that strong ties played a role because of the very large size of the CFPS, the diversity of departments, and the fact that the CFPS is a major employer in Ottawa.

Serendipity can also be helpful in understanding how networks sometimes function to help an individual’s career. For example, two types of chance events that Betsworth and Hansen (1996) found were professional or personal connections as well as encouragement of others. The authors do not, however, connect chance events with organizational networks, nor does other research on serendipity appear to do so. In the present study several examples noted above highlight the potential power of an individual’s network, including strong and weak ties, to trigger chance events that could lead to career opportunities. To be more specific, Laurie calling her very good friend, Becky’s sister spotting a competitive poster which matched Becky’s skills, and the individual recognizing Laurie’s name on a competitive application, were all chance events which in turn precipitated a second chance event (encouragement). This encouragement led both Becky and Laurie to decide to follow up, and in each case they got new jobs.

The concept of structural holes is helpful in understanding what an individual must do in order to advance into the executive level. A structural hole is essentially a gap or buffer in a social structure separating two groups each of which have different flows of information (Burt, 2000, p. 353). Regarding the issue of getting into EX levels, an individual needs to span the large structural hole that lies between the EX-minus-levels

and EX levels. More simply put, one could envision an imaginary competitive game in which there are two groups of players, one group who have more power because they know and use the rules to successfully play the game (i.e., EX-01's) and the other group who are beginning players and do not really know the rules of the game (i.e., EX-minus-01's). Experienced players have a vested interest in withholding information in order to retain their power. As Corsun and Costen (2001) argue, it is in the best interest of those who are powerful within organizations to "maintain ambiguity or mystery regarding the positional requirements of the field" (p. 20) if they hope to keep and grow their power. At the same time, an EX-minus-01 (a beginning player) who wants to join in the "game" is dependent on the "the dominant players for information, opportunity, and benevolence" (Corsun & Costen, p. 20) to help them bridge the information gap (structural hole) between the EX-minus-01 and EX-01 levels.

In this study, several participants pointed out that they had opportunities to meet executives in various ways which helped them de-mystify the EX level work. Wanda and Laurie noted that being on working groups was important to their establishing their diverse networks. Elizabeth at one point worked in a highly prestigious multi-disciplinary working group with professionals and experts led by an Assistant Deputy Minister. Both Laurie and Wanda at times had senior managers bring them to high-level meetings where they could observe the inner workings at executive levels and which also helped raise their visibility at that level. Prior to attempting their EX-01 level competitive processes, both Laurie and Grace sought out knowledgeable contacts and asked how to handle various situations and questions that might be asked. Elizabeth's CAP program was designed to bridge her into the EX level. She travelled extensively with her 15 CAP

colleagues “finding out what is Canada as new executives”; her stretch assignments gave her direct access to the EX world; and her CAP colleagues became an important network to her.

In contrast to the examples above, Susan felt that she had no opportunities to meet people in working group contexts who might facilitate her learning about EX work. She attempted to bridge the gap between herself and the EX level by contacting the CFPS Association of Professional Executives (APEX) in the hopes that she could be linked up with someone who could help her establish connections. Not surprisingly, given that networks take time and effort to develop and that the EX level is not easily accessible to non-members, she was not successful.

Influence of Superiors on Career Development and Advancement

A traditional perspective of mentoring is typically considered to be a dyadic relationship of a superior who helps a protégé develop in his or her personal and professional development (Higgins & Kram, 2001). This relationship sometimes lasts for many years and goes through several stages (Akande, 1994). This traditional definition does not capture the essence of the findings of the present study; in fact, participants rarely used the term ‘mentor’ in reference to those who helped them develop their careers. At the same time, the women did refer to superiors whose actions positively influenced them in one way or another. A more appropriate term to capture this form of support may be Higgins and Kram’s (2001) concept of “developers”, which they define as individuals who offer developmental assistance in the form of career and/or psychosocial support.

van Emmerik's (2006) concepts of hard and soft social capital seem particularly helpful in pinpointing various forms of developmental assistance that participants in the present study received. Individuals acquire hard social capital resources through work relationships with developers; it takes such forms as "advice, contacts, coaching, and protection...or help to get challenging and visible assignments" (van Emmerik, 2006, pp. 25-26). In the present study there were numerous examples of various forms of hard social capital. One of Cate's bosses advised her to take a job up North that she was hesitant about, and another former boss circulated her resume when she was looking for a job. Susan's boss agreed that it would be beneficial for her to take courses to help her career. Some of Wanda's and Laurie's superiors took them to high-level meetings which provided an opportunity for visibility and contacts at the executive level. In Grace's case, one of her superiors took a chance and offered her a challenging assignment despite her being an unlikely candidate for the job. One of Elizabeth's bosses took her "under his wing literally" and loved teaching her whatever she needed to learn in her job.

A very important form of hard social capital resources identified in the present study, but not mentioned by van Emmerik (2006), was direct and indirect financial support. The superiors of many participants provided financial assistance for different types of educational and training opportunities. For example, Wanda, Grace and Olivia all received funding through the budgets of their superiors for their formal educational programs. One of Elizabeth's superiors formally advocated to his boss to commit substantial funding for her to participate in CAP. At another time, one of Elizabeth's new bosses recommended, arranged, and paid for one full year of expensive counselling from the CFPS, which Elizabeth is grateful for even to this day. Several participants also

benefitted from their superior's support for French language training which entailed being away from the office for extended periods of time. This form of hard social capital helped advance their careers through a chain of exchanges of various types of capital. To be more specific, in Bourdieuan terms, social capital in the form of support from superiors led to participants' acquiring economic capital in the form of money or its equivalent which, in turn, enhanced their institutional cultural capital (degrees, certificates, registration of linguistic profile) as well as their embodied cultural capital (sense of self, confidence, and so on).

Soft social capital resources also played a part in shaping participants' careers. According to van Emmerik (2006), soft social capital is socio-emotional in nature; it takes such forms as "counselling, friendship, and modeling [which] helps...develop self-esteem and professional identity" (p. 26). In the present study, several participants noted how they appreciated and learned from those whom they felt were exemplary superiors. Participants used various adjectives to describe their superiors: values such as honesty, integrity and respect; interpersonal skills such as a sense of humour, patience, being calm and complimentary; and task-related skills such as being results-oriented, able to make decisions and to delegate. Another key example of soft social capital was the social emotional counselling received by Elizabeth through her boss's intervention that helped her re-establish confidence in herself following a very tumultuous time in her career.

Another way to understand how superiors influenced participants' careers is through the lens of self-efficacy. In several cases participants noted how superiors sometimes helped them through offering encouragement, which is one of four ways to build self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). One of Cate's bosses encouraged her to take a job up

North and supported her in doing so. Elizabeth's boss cautioned her about how difficult it was to be accepted into CAP—presumably to preserve her sense of efficacy in the event that she would be unsuccessful – yet he still advocated for her to his superior. This latter example also highlights Bandura's (1997) point that those who encourage unrealistic expectations may lose credibility and also “undermine the recipients' beliefs in their [own] capabilities” (p. 101).

Several participants also raved about how a few of their superiors had been extraordinary individuals. One can sense through their descriptions that they considered these individuals great role-models. Laurie described one particular boss as “phenomenal” and who had “all the right characteristics”; Becky returned to work with one special boss three times in part because she loved the fact that he made a point to make the workplace fun. These types of modelling examples (Bandura, 1997) were particularly evident in Elizabeth's career development; she referred to several special superiors with amazing qualities that clearly impacted her sense of self-efficacy. We even hear a sense of the affective (Bandura) in her descriptions of the impact they have had on her through such statements as “I got to learn from all of this!”, “he took me under his wing literally”, “[she, a DG, was] a huge influence on me in...re-establishing my confidence... informing me [of] my shortcomings and helping me to work on [them]”.

As inferred in Elizabeth's example above, a few superiors helped participants develop self-efficacy through a combination of encouragement, modelling, and/or providing important learning experiences. Grace's manager gave her a project (the chance to acquire experience); he placed “an enormous amount of trust” in her despite

there being better suited candidates (encouragement); and because of this, Grace would “JUMP at the chance to work with him again!” (affective response).

Non-supportive superiors also played a role in participants’ careers. Some of their examples involved more subtle behaviours such as covert racism, superiors who focused only on their own careers to the detriment of their subordinates, and a participant being used unknowingly as a downsizing change agent. Laurie seems to have characterized *her* experiences with racism as a case of individual racism (Khan, 2008). She seemed to attribute racist comments directed toward her to unconscious behaviour and attitudes of specific superiors that could have been based on values of the dominant culture at the time. Moreover, she has made it a point to frame such insensitive comments as “their problem!” and has refused to let it break her spirit. This approach worked for Laurie in that she has not become cynical yet she remains sensitive to the fact that racism in the organization exists. From a self-efficacy point of view, Laurie appears to have resilient self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997) in the face of possible racist discrimination.

Several participants recalled having superiors who felt a sense of entitlement regarding their own career needs while ignoring those of others. Ironically two of the three superiors were in the Accelerated EX Development Program (AEXDP), which presumably aims to encourage management development. Elizabeth learned a tough lesson about how senior management can be insensitive to one’s contribution. When she presented her exceptional departmental restructuring/downsizing plan to them on her last day of work there, she was stunned and felt betrayed at their utter lack of recognition for having accomplished this very difficult task.

Other examples of non-supportive superiors were more obvious behaviours such as psychological abuse, abuse of authority, and sexist behaviour, which could have led to, and in two cases did lead to, formal grievances. When Cate and Olivia consulted reconciliation specialists, they were advised to do nothing or it could harm their careers. This response is not surprising; according to Hoffmann (2009) employees are often reluctant to file grievances because it challenges the order of the hierarchy. Elizabeth, Laurie, Becky, and Wanda resolved their difficulties with non-supportive managers and protected their careers and perhaps their sense of self-efficacy by finding other CFPS jobs and then left their current positions. Some evidence suggests that women are particularly likely to transfer laterally to remove themselves from a bad work situation rather than use internal conflict resolution mechanisms (Hoffmann). Elizabeth also made a point of smoothing over her delicate relationship with her powerful boss, recognizing that she could have stymied her career. Laurie confronted her boss about his unfair decision and left almost immediately. Becky and Wanda both filed formal grievances but these actions did not protect their careers. Becky received an official letter of apology but never again received work through that employer. Wanda learned several harsh lessons during the grievance process. She was shocked at her supervisor's unprofessional behaviour, the fact that everyone in the office found out about what should have been a private matter, and how many years it took to mend bridges with her former supervisor. Moreover, fearing that she would be transferred to "some Godforsaken place", she found another CFPS job. Wanda's experiences bear out the inherent dangers to one's career when pursuing a formal grievance process (Hoffmann). At the same time, this experience helped her

develop a stronger sense of self-efficacy; as she put it, “ I develop[ed] a spine...[and realized] I don’t have to take this – I can stand up and say, ‘this is not right’”.

In sum, both supportive and non-supportive superiors helped shape participants’ careers in numerous ways. Helpful superiors provided hard and soft social capital that enhanced participants’ careers. Although unhelpful superiors did at times make life difficult for participants, they nevertheless learned many important lessons from these experiences. They learned how to keep their sense of self-efficacy intact, how not to behave as a superior, how formal grievance has its limitations, and how finding another job in the same or another department within the larger CFPS may be the best solution.

Research Question 3:

How have personal and organizational factors combined to influence career development and advancement of women in the CFPS towards and into the EX-minus-01 and EX-01 levels?

In reflecting on the third research question, it is important to stress that preceding analyses in this chapter have, in fact, often considered the interaction of personal and organizational factors on participants’ career development and advancement. In the first part of the chapter, personal factors have been foregrounded, whereas in the second part of the chapter organizational factors have been foregrounded. To illustrate with a few examples: Grace demonstrated tenacity through balancing work demands while she completed eleven years of post-secondary education which was also supported by the organization through financial assistance and partially paid leave. Becky was easily bored and enjoyed taking on new challenges; at the same time she had no post-secondary education and she received very little in the way of organizational support for her

learning. Ann struggled at times with the long hours required at work and a husband who did not understand her need to work so much.

This part of the chapter spotlights the combination of personal and organizational factors in two different ways. First, I consider the theme of Androcentrism, a thread that seemed to run through both personal and organizational aspects of participants' career development. I conclude with short snapshots of the ten individuals that focus on pivotal personal and organizational factors that have influenced their careers.

Androcentrism

Although the CFPS is an organization with almost 54 percent female employees, the career stories of the ten participants provide several compelling examples of how an androcentric bias has at times and in certain ways influenced the development of their careers. The origin of the word derives from the Greek word “andro” which means man or male. Typically androcentrism suggests that a male-centred point of view is predominant and where male practices tend to be the norm. In saying that there were instances of androcentrism, I am not suggesting this was a “bad thing” or that the organization was insensitive to women's needs; rather my point is that the women's careers appear to be influenced by a more “masculine” view of the world.

Several departments in which the participants worked had many more men than women; therefore, there was a prevalence of male supervisors. Participants have also described how overwhelmingly more men tended to advocate for them and help them advance in their careers and also provided them with good role models. Men, much more so than women, were prominent in their career life stories. For example, Elizabeth especially, had several men advocate for her and take her under their wing. Wanda has

had only one female boss in her entire 18-year career with the CFPS, and her male bosses have brought her with them to high-level meetings so she could learn the decision-making process. Grace had opportunities to learn and grow from men who she said trusted her, and who encouraged her to get her law degree and work in an area in which she was a most unlikely candidate. Laurie had a male boss who would take her to a meeting with the Deputy Minister, in contrast to her female boss; and she mentioned quite a few men as supervisors whom she admired and from whom she learned a lot. One even offered her an EX-01 job since he saw something in her. The predominance of male superiors and role models is not so surprising, however, because until 1999 men outnumbered women in the CFPS. Moreover, they still represent a sizeable majority of higher level jobs (see Table 1).

Androcentrism on the home front seemed to work hand in hand at times with androcentrism at the office. This was often evident when it came to issues related to one's family, especially when one had small children at home. An androcentric view is typically one that views family as being problematic – something that other people, usually women, take care of. While participants' family partners were sometimes helpful, the idea of having a family at home to care for did nothing to enhance career prospects. Elizabeth's case was a notable exception in that she had a husband who often took over many family responsibilities while she got her career under way. That said, balancing the needs of her family with the demands of work was not without a struggle on her part as well. She mentioned how sad it had been that she was able to "disassociate herself from her family", but that seemed to be what the CFPS required if she was to advance in her career. In this sense, the "myth of separate worlds" (Kanter, 1977) seems to pervade the

CFPS. There seems to be a myopic notion that there is your career in the CFPS and then there are other less important things like family which are secondary. It is almost expected that women have a “wife” at home to look after the family. The present study demonstrates that this is not a view only held by male superiors but also by female superiors as well. Have your family but don’t let it interfere with your CFPS job.

If the findings of the present study are any indication, women who have set their sights on reaching the executive level need to be willing to work long hours. They have to really want what some might call “extreme jobs” despite how this requirement affects their other responsibilities.

However, at mid-life, which tends to be the age when most reach pre-executive and entry executive levels, women may feel the need to question the time pressures and the value they place on their family life while the workplace may be expecting them to give first and foremost to their job. Perhaps that is why in part Laurie, Grace, and Wanda hesitated at first when thinking about applying for an EX-01 position, weighing time left prior to retirement, and why Megan seemed content to retire at the EX-minus-01 level. The idea of giving “your all” to the organization does not convey a “balanced” view of work and life. Grace seemed to intuitively believe this point: she felt she had to choose between her career and motherhood and she chose career. Ann wound up divorcing her husband over this issue. Cate and Elizabeth at times struggled in their attempts to negotiate flexibility in their work schedules due to family responsibilities.

With the exception of Ann, the education of participants who advanced to executive levels, was in female non-traditional domains or at least not domains that were

predominantly female. Elizabeth had studied engineering, Grace had studied policing and later law, Laurie had studied mathematics and statistics, and Wanda completed her MBA. Moreover, these same individuals seem to have advanced higher in the CFPS in part due to being in environments where most of their superiors were men. Grace, for one, appears to have benefitted from a wise male boss who recognized that she needed assertiveness training to help her feel more empowered when dealing with other male colleagues.

As shown above, androcentrism was both a negative and positive force within the careers of the participants as a group. In some ways, some individuals seemed to benefit more from it, whereas others seemed to be particularly disadvantaged by it, and still others intensely experienced both its negative and positive effects.

Final Participant Snapshots

Ann

Ann's tenacity was the most prevalent theme throughout her CFPS career. Her English degree was not enough to help her keep up in a high-paced policy area. Her extreme work ethic, doggedness and determination kept her in a job and working 12 or more hour days. Ann had little skills development support. She had no networks and didn't develop her interpersonal skills; she was unable to manage staff effectively, and had few supportive bosses or good role models. Her husband expected her to manage all household duties and childcare. While she felt, in retrospect, that her career was successful, she spoke of her success in terms of material things that she was able to acquire, a house, cottage, and money for financial stability for her son. At what cost? Although she got to the EX-01 level, she suffered two failed relationships, had no friends

– “NOT ONE – ZERO”: this led to grave illness –she almost died. Ann’s career was her life.

Becky

Becky, with no post-secondary education has developed her career through having an open mind, seizing opportunities, always asking for increasingly more responsibility and being able to rise to the occasion. Becky has developed a good reputation as being somewhat of an expert in her field, having taught herself 15 financial computerized systems which she uses extensively in her jobs. However, she has had very little formal support from superiors for professional development, especially since operationally she is almost always needed at work. Becky’s husband has supported her with household work and child care which may also have been an enabling factor in her career advancement. Her work with the intellectually challenged, subsequent award and care in dealing with people in a sensitive manner demonstrates her inter-personal skills. Becky is self-efficacious and undaunted by new challenges. She is somewhat of an anomaly being at the level she is without a degree and having had little formal development support.

Cate

Cate has had a difficult time throughout her career in the CFPS. Despite two Masters degrees, she felt marginalized, fighting for years to prove herself. She believes that she has received little support from managers and has had few role models. However, Cate received full-time language training for eight months and got her BBB levels; desired language training to get to CBC has not materialized. A single mother, she believes pregnancy and her need to manage child-care responsibilities may be somewhat career-limiting; it was sometimes assumed that someone else should care for the child,

and she feels that managers narrowly interpret family-friendly policies. Cate admits to having a “chip on her shoulder that goes away and comes back”; if she doesn’t compare herself to men who started at the same time and are at higher levels, she feels she has done well for herself and is proud that she has made a contribution to Canadians.

Elizabeth

Elizabeth had everything going for her. A very bright, ambitious and creative woman, with an engineering degree and “lofty aspirations”, she has been determined to develop and advance in her career. With three very young children, one might have expected her to advance slowly and/or to not reach the executive level, but she saw to it that this would not be her destiny. She used maternity leave as a change agent; had several exceptional men as role models and used those opportunities to learn from them; had a Director who advocated for her to receive extensive funding needed to participate in the selective Career Assignment Program (CAP); and had another boss who arranged and paid for one year of counseling following a period when she had faltered. But her life was not without struggles and she shed tears along the way. She felt compelled to leave one job in order to mitigate career risks due to a boss who refused to accommodate her family responsibilities; she was forced out of an Acting position due to not having the necessary degree; and she failed to complete a one-year out-of-town placement due to family demands. Elizabeth seemed to always keep a positive attitude and at times appeared to externalize difficulties; these strategies no doubt helped her preserve her great sense of self-efficacy. Throughout the many years while she was building her career her husband played a pivotal role in managing the household and the children; at one point he even gave up the chance for a lucrative job in another city which resulted in his

being unemployed for about a year. For all these reasons, it is not surprising that Elizabeth has advanced to the EX-02 level in her CFPS career.

Grace

Armed with a secretarial certificate, Grace began her career in the CFPS at a very low-level position, but she has since advanced numerous levels and is now at the entry-executive level (EX-01). Earlier on in her career, she obtained a police certificate when she was told she would need more education to get ahead in the department. She also spent nine long years getting her undergraduate law degree, again because she realized this would help her advance in her career. As a young woman, she had wanted children, but felt she had to choose between having children and a career – the career won. Over the years, Grace has had several male bosses who have helped her recognize that she would need more development to get ahead; they also helped her by providing her with job flexibility as well as a little financial and moral support to help her further her education. Notably, one of Grace's bosses had recognized that she had difficulties in speaking up and sent her on assertiveness training. At that time, being in a male-dominated environment, this professional development helped Grace – now when she has something to say, she says it. Grace always believed she could do more, considered herself an “achiever”, and has always aimed to improve herself.

Laurie

Laurie's first encounter with the CFPS was through a summer placement, which led to her being noticed and accepted into a permanent position, through a student bridging mechanism, while she completed her Masters in Mathematics and Statistics. Laurie, a private person, has established and used formal organizational processes; and she has

established and used her organizational networks over the years to build her career. On at least several occasions these strategies have led to her obtaining great career opportunities different from those she had originally sought. A determined woman, she successfully persevered in her first EX-01 job under almost impossible conditions where she could have “very easily sunk”. Laurie believes that she has learned from both good and bad bosses; she left one boss following a broken promise to gain experience in an Acting position at the EX-01 level. She had two children early on in her career and feels that she gave her “all” to both family and work; she is now divorced but does not attribute this to her job but rather in part due to the fact that they had grown apart. She frames people’s issues with her being a Black woman as *their* problem; and moves on. Now an EX-01, Laurie has loved her career in the CFPS and believes that it has offered her wonderful opportunities.

Megan

Megan, in the CFPS for only seven years, suspects she got her first job in part because the boss made an incorrect assumption that Health Administration was similar to Environment. She entered at an EX-minus-01 level and has remained at this level. However, she has at times been Acting Director (EX-01); and although she doesn’t mind Acting on occasion, she prefers not to work the long hours required on a regular basis. She recognizes that managing people is not easy, that it is extremely time-consuming; she prefers working on projects. Megan’s husband did not care whether she worked or not – she chose to work. She undertook her Masters degree soon after her baby was born. Although she was financially independent, with a mother’s helper and a good baby that slept most of the time, she wonders why more women don’t use their maternity leave as

an opportunity to gain further education. She loves her job and takes leave income averaging to be able to go away for two months at a time. If she can continue to do that, she will likely work a few more years.

Olivia

Olivia, who has remained with the same department almost two decades, later on completed a university Management Development Program for Women certificate, which she feels would have helped her much earlier on in her career. Otherwise, the department has provided her with mandatory training only for the jobs she was in at the time.

Although Olivia says she would like to be an EX-01 and has unsuccessfully tried some competitive processes, she has found it difficult to find anyone who would be able to help her understand why she is being screened out for jobs at that level in order to learn what to do differently next time. Her husband has always supported her in the sense that he has never complained about her hours of work – even though she works 10-hour days now as an EX-minus-01. Over the years she has experienced some challenges. At one point she regrets having worked for a Deputy Minister who was cold and hardly spoke to her; and she experienced psychological harassment but was advised not to pursue a grievance due to her lower status in relation to the harasser. At this point in her career she continues to strive toward the EX-01 level.

Susan

Susan's largest difficulties in advancing her career seem to have been due to two major factors: her lack of connections and her lack of French. In the North, where she had spent the earlier part of her CFPS career, she had had the professional development she needed, and a great boss. Her Masters in History and Canadian Studies helped her obtain

her earlier CFPS jobs in the North. She also loved the North. Since having arrived in Ottawa, Susan is having difficulties in establishing a network in the National Capital Region (Ottawa and Gatineau area). She has found that being in a predominantly male environment in her department that she “lacks voice”. She has been unable to find anyone she can trust to confide in regarding her career aspirations. Moreover, she lacks the necessary French language profile that is necessary to enter into the first executive level; and her repeated attempts to negotiate French language training have led nowhere. She took a year leave of absence to consider her next career move and is considering leaving the CFPS to become a consultant.

Wanda

Wanda appears to have had great support throughout her career in the CFPS. Her CFPS career was launched when she entered into a comprehensive training program within her department. Except for a brief assignment elsewhere, she has been with the same department ever since. Years ago she launched a grievance which the organization had handled very poorly; and feeling intimidated and fearing her career would be affected, she left the job and transferred to the National Capital Region. She feels the experience has helped her to “develop a spine”. Wanda has established deep and lasting ties within her section of the department. She has made a point to ask her bosses to bring her to higher level meetings and they have done so. She negotiated French to obtain her CBC levels which helped position her for an EX position. Easily bored and always needing new challenges, she learned many key departmental files. She is a hard worker and is driven to excel. When Wanda was considering applying for an EX-01 position, her

partner was supportive at first but is now rather ambivalent about Wanda's extended long hours spent at the office.

Chapter 7 has discussed the findings presented in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 and has been organized according to the three guiding research questions. The first question reviewed personal factors, and the second question pointed out various organizational factors – each of which influenced participants' careers in the CFPS. The last question dealt with how personal and organizational factors intertwined to influence participants' careers. Chapter 8 follows with Concluding Comments.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

This study has focused on several key personal and organizational factors that helped shape the careers of ten pre-executive or entry executive level women in the CFPS. Their career stories have highlighted the complex issues, obstacles, challenges and successes that together give us clues as to how their careers have developed. By having foregrounded in turn several key personal factors and organizational factors, and then spotlighting how both types of factors have together shaped their careers, one has been able to get a glimpse of the complexity of this important life process. These complex and inter-related factors are pieces of a puzzle that when reassembled, provide us with a picture of how, through their eyes, the CFPS careers of ten women have unfolded. The experiences of each individual woman is unique and therefore can be considered one piece of another puzzle; taken together their ten career stories add up to another textured, albeit partial, view of career development and advancement within the CFPS. The study has also relied on seven sensitizing concepts to help explore key factors influencing their career development and advancement. In this way they too form pieces of a puzzle that together provide further insight into women's careers.

My concluding comments have been organized according to seven sensitizing concepts; the historical context has primarily been included to situate the position of CFPS women over time and the Acronyms and Terminology have been included to help the reader navigate the text. I consider each of the remaining sensitizing concepts in turn, highlighting key findings of the study as well as key implications for future research, for

CFPS policy makers and those responsible for professional development of CFPS employees, for career counselors university educators , for organizational “developers”, and/or for all individuals who are developing careers or considering careers in the CFPS.

I have found Bourdieu’s (1985, 1986) concepts of habitus, capital and field to be very helpful for the analysis because they have helped us understand how the women “became themselves”, how they acquired and used various forms of capital (economic, cultural and social), and how the “fields” in which they found themselves have influenced their careers in one way or another. Perhaps one of the most overarching findings of the study has been the importance of context or “field” in the sense that individuals within the field determine the “rules of the game” and those with the most power in the fields are those who control the game. Moreover, fields shift over time as different individuals find ways to gain more influence. The value of Bourdieu’s concepts will be demonstrated in later comments when I discuss other contributions and implications of the study.

Researchers studying organizational networks have recently begun to use Bourdieu’s concept of social capital in developing further concepts such as structural holes and weak and strong ties. Bourdieu’s other concepts such as field and other forms of capital (institutional cultural capital, embodied cultural capital, economic capital) which influence one’s habitus, have with a few exceptions, been rarely linked to issues related to career development. The present study has demonstrated that Bourdieu’s concepts are promising ways for future researchers to explore this important life process. Research on self-efficacy as it pertains to careers has largely focused on early career stages of young people and how they acquire a sense of self-efficacy during the course of their career. Bandura’s concept of self-efficacy has been useful in understanding how

more mature women have increased their sense of self-efficacy during the course of their career. Ann and Elizabeth's career experiences highlight how self-efficacy may be affected during one's career in very different ways. Although they both appear, upon entry into the CFPS, to have a strong sense of self-efficacy, Elizabeth's diverse and exciting experiences, exemplary role models, and support from superiors, seem to have increased her sense of self-efficacy and perhaps even enhanced her resilient self-efficacy which helped her deal effectively with difficult situations. Ann, in contrast, appeared to have her self-efficacy undermined by virtue of having spent twelve long years in a job where she felt marginalized and did not have the "habitus" to match the environment she was in. Moreover, she attributed her illness in part to this factor, reflective of Bandura's point regarding the close connection between self-efficacy and how one perceives the underlying causes leading to physiological stress (negative affective state).

This type of finding has implications for superiors in the CFPS whose roles as developers can either add to a person's self-efficacy, thereby having a more productive employee, or can undermine one's self-efficacy through lack of or negative feedback, which could even contribute to illness or non-performance. Moreover, researchers who are interested in women's career development might well consider studying self-efficacy as it pertains to women's careers and the role superiors play in this association.

This study also highlights how those who are ambitious and who seek other challenges are also those who want to make a contribution. As Bandura has noted, successful outcomes lead to enhanced self-efficacy. Evidence from the present study has demonstrated that because the CFPS is such a lumbering bureaucracy, with political masters, it is difficult for an individual to effect much change. For example, some

participants had worked many years in attempting to accomplish one small goal that could make a difference to a community. A similar point was made in a recent study by the Public Policy Forum involving 50 prominent Canadians, some of whom were or had been high level federal public servants (Green & Côté, 2007). Moreover, Susan, who considered herself “entrepreneurial”, was contemplating leaving the CFPS for this reason. These types of findings suggest that the CFPS needs to find ways to improve processes and relationships with a view to shortening the time it can take to accomplish needed outcomes. Otherwise the organization risks losing some of their brightest and committed people who want to make a difference.

Several participants noted that they serendipitously “fell into their jobs”. It may not have been entirely by chance, however. Using Krumboltz’s planned happenstance concept has been helpful in understanding the value of being open-minded and ready to seize unexpected opportunities. Participants seemed to have had their resumes polished, and always seemed open and ready to change jobs within the CFPS, either when others offered new challenges or when they needed to move because of perceived injustice or for other reasons.

Given the limited research suggesting that serendipity does play a part in people’s careers (exceptions include Betsworth & Hansen, 1996; Williams et al., 1998) future studies on career advancement should take serendipity into consideration. Having said that, this will not be an easy undertaking. As Bandura (1998) points out, such research presents a challenge, in part due to the unforeseeable nature of chance events, the complex web of influences that contributes towards outcomes derived from those events, as well as the lack of methodological tools needed to study the phenomena. From a more

practical perspective, managers in the CFPS need to be sensitive to the fact that some valued employees may often seize unplanned events and opportunities to advance in their careers. Therefore, for retention purposes, it seems wise to have open communications with employees and to provide them with opportunities to grow and develop within their own departments. In another vein, it would seem that a developmental manager would encourage one's employees to remain open to promising chance events for furthering their careers. Career counselors and educators could also make a point of highlighting the value of being open-minded about serendipitous opportunities.

Regarding formal education, nine of the ten participants had institutionalized cultural capital in the form of post-secondary education that they clearly indicated influenced their careers since this provided them with knowledge, skills and abilities needed to do their jobs at the outset. However, in certain situations, a degree was a valued form of capital whereas in another situation it was not quite so valued. For Elizabeth, her undergraduate degree gave her great leverage in the early years of her CFPS career, however, in several later positions; she found her degree to be much less valued. This type of finding is important in that we tend to believe that education is the key to career success. And this for the most part is true. That said, as shown above, one's institutional cultural capital (formal education credentials) is only as valuable as the field deems it to be. This is not to say that I am suggesting that individuals do not need formal education; in fact it is a necessity. What I am stressing is that career counselors, educators, and individuals themselves need to recognize that the value of a given degree can be quite context specific and this context is forever changing. Another important finding is that the five women in the study who are executives today tended to be those who had formal

education in non female-dominated fields. Although I am not suggesting that this finding is generalizable to the larger CFPS population, this curious and promising finding nonetheless requires further study.

Professional development played several important roles in the careers of participants in the present study. As a group they had received financial support for university and college programs, specialized training at entry levels, and funding for internal professional development courses and services. The Career Assignment Program (CAP) was by far the most influential form of support in helping an individual reach executive level; one individual in this study was able to take advantage of this program. Gaining access to French language training was the most problematic for non-bilingual participants because it is often a requirement for a given job or for a job one aspires to. However, support for professional development was very often at the discretion of one's supervisor, so inequity becomes a possibility. Some participants gained access to more assistance than others. These findings are important for future workers for several reasons. Those hoping to build a career in the CFPS need to identify what their professional development needs are and work closely with their superior to support their needs. Managers for their part need to be sensitive to their employees' learning needs and to also strive to be fair in their support. Regarding the issue of bilingualism, young people hoping to build a career in the CFPS are well advised to acquire both official languages prior to entering the organization.

Regarding work-life conflict, in the present study the struggles of women with children have been evident as showcased by two cases in particular, that of Cate and Elizabeth. Both mothers had issues in their careers with lack of organizational flexibility.

In Elizabeth's case, someone else, for the most part her husband, often managed domestic and childcare duties. In Cate's case, her solution was to push back, which does not seem to be a particularly good strategy for one's career advancement in an organization that requires almost unconditional commitment to the job at higher levels. Although researchers have been studying women's particular challenges and tensions between paid work and non-work responsibilities and the negative aspects of long hours on health and families in general (Kanter, 1977; Blair-Loy, 2003; Higgins & Duxbury, 2002), we know much less about the work-life relationship regarding women's career progression at the pre-executive and entry executive levels of the CFPS. The findings of this study demonstrate clearly that there is still a myth of separate worlds that influences women's career development and advancement. This myth suggests that there are stresses and strains; there may be some who can do it all but there are prices to be paid. These individuals also need support. More research needs to be done in this area. From a practice point of view, the CFPS, including all levels of management and perhaps particularly senior management, needs to pay more attention to this issue if they hope to recruit and retain younger people who may well be striving for a balanced life. This will not be an easy task, given the longstanding entrenched norm of long hours as well as seductive new technologies that invade people's private lives.

Another way to think about work-family issues is to view it through a positive lens. Some research suggests that one derives fulfillment from being able to have both work and family. Moreover, those who succeed in balancing work and family may be particularly good leaders due to their ability to manage multiple roles, thus enhancing one's career prospects. The findings from the present study suggest that both work and

children were valued. The challenge however is to find ways to successfully manage both. Elizabeth's career life story provides some insight into one woman's innovative strategies to maintain this balance. Moreover, her story demonstrates how her organizational skills have enabled her to advance in her career and still have a family life. That said, this organization subscribes to the myth of separate worlds. It is also both notable and troubling that some women who aspire to higher levels may feel they have to choose between a career and having children, as Grace did, because they understandably feel that the two domains are mutually exclusive. These findings raise important questions. What is the cost to society if bright capable women feel they need to choose between a career and having children? Are "greedy organizations" still forcing women to choose between work and living a meaningful life outside of work?

Moreover, this study showed the inside struggle of one family – Elizabeth's – with regard to a partner's role in the relationship. Although this study did not focus on men, Elizabeth's case demonstrates the serious struggles of dual career families. The study showed the huge tensions that arise when one has to ignore children in order to advance in one's career, to the possible detriment of the other partner at times. Therefore, this study raises another issue – what about men in dual career families? Findings from the present study highlight how men can play a much larger role in families than one might have previously suspected. While most research concentrates on women's difficulties with work-life conflict, this tension is becoming relevant for men in many ways as well. Although there are no simple solutions to the struggles of dual-career families, this line of research seems important to continue.

Regarding yet another work-life issue, in the present study, the one participant who had a female partner did not have any children; therefore the “child” issue did not arise. Nonetheless, increasing numbers of gay and lesbian couples are raising children. Therefore, as Pitt-Catsouphes, et. al., (2006) point out, the issues facing these new family compositions may be different from heterosexual families and, therefore warrant future study.

In the context of the CFPS there are many opportunities for movement throughout the various departments due for the most part to its large size. From the findings of the present study we are able to derive a sense of how social capital links to organizational networks, and the importance that participants gave to their networks in helping them find out about jobs and for other information-sharing. At the same time, even though networks are good for furthering one’s career, they tend to be cultivated over a considerable amount of time. One exception that makes the rule was Susan who, being from a Western region, had few networks of local people who might be able to help her move her career forward. In a Public Policy Forum in which 50 prominent Canadians, including senior federal public servants, Green & Côté, (2007) noted that there are extremely poor relationships between public servants in Ottawa and those in the regions (p. 3). From my own experience this disconnect between headquarters in the National Capital Region and the other provincial and territorial regions is no secret. In contrast to Susan, Wanda illustrates how social networks run deep by virtue of having been in the same department for eighteen years, and Elizabeth’s longstanding relationship with her former CAP colleagues illustrates the same point. Moreover, the findings of the study demonstrate the importance of cultivating weak ties within one’s network. Career

counselors, educators, and individuals themselves need to be sensitive to the power of networks, particularly those networks that include weak ties. Furthermore, they need to recognize that developing and nurturing one's network takes time and requires an establishment of trust that largely stems from authentic connections.

The findings of the study have demonstrated that individuals who are important to people's career development and advancement need not be "mentors" who have taken on a protégé, but rather are "career developers" who have intervened at various times along the career paths of participants to support them in various ways. The concept of structural holes has also been useful to visualize how developers are instrumental in helping an individual make connections to other networks, and hence may help provide experiences that cannot easily be accessed on one's own. Career counselors, human resource professionals, and managers themselves need to recognize that mentoring can be done in informal strategic ways that need not imply a longstanding relationship with a protégé. Furthermore, the concept of structural hole seems to be a useful metaphor that captures how difficult it can be for an individual to build ties on one's own.

In closing, this qualitative research study explored the experiences of ten women who are near or in entry executive levels in the Canadian Federal Public Service. It is hoped that the findings of this study will contribute towards a greater understanding of the many personal and organizational factors that may affect women's career development and advancement. This, in turn, may foster more effective strategies for improving the lives of others who choose a career within the CFPS.

APPENDIX A

ACRONYMS AND TERMINOLOGY

Acronyms

ADM	Assistant Deputy Minister – responsible for departmental programs
AEXDP	Accelerated EX Development Program – program to advance executives who have shown that they have the potential to become Assistant Deputy Ministers. (Canada School of Public Service, 2008)
CAP	Career Assignment Program – a program that aimed to accelerate leadership development and advancement by recruiting public servants with demonstrated executive potential. The Career Assignment program, delivered by the Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer is being phased out as a central initiative. Departments and agencies now have the responsibility for employee development at this level. During a 3-year placement, CAP participants would take part in a combination of hands-on work experience and training sessions to prepare them for senior level positions. (Treasury Board Secretariat of Canada, 2010a)
CFPS	Canadian Federal Public Service
DG	Director General – Responsible for individual program files related to more than one area of responsibility
DM	Deputy Minister – Department Head
EX level	Executive Level – refers to all levels of executives
EX-minus-01	One level just below executive level
EX-minus-02	Two levels below executive level
EX-01	First entry executive level (normally called a Director)
MBA	Master of Business Administration (a graduate degree)
MTP	Management Trainee Program – previously delivered by Office of Chief Human Resources Officer, now being phased out – departments are responsible for providing various assignments to those inside and outside government to become managers in the CFPS. (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, 2010b).

FSWEP	Federal Student Work Experience Program (a student bridging mechanism to hire students into the public service after graduation) (Public Service Commission of Canada, November 24, 2009).
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Terminology

Acting (as in Acting Director)	An acting designation can be at any level and it means that a person in a lower level position is given an acting assignment in a higher level job – they are paid at the higher level during the time they are doing the job. For example an EX-minus-01 who gets an Acting Director position (EX-01) is normally paid at the Director level for the period of time that they are acting as a Director.
Assignment	A person who obtains a job at their substantive group and level within one's own department. Secondment – an assignment in a different department.
B.Comm.	Bachelor of Commerce (undergraduate university degree)
Briefing Notes	A briefing note is a key communication and decision-making tool in government whose purpose may be to assist in making a decision and defining an issue or to consider a course of action. It provides relevant information in a clear, concise manner which is useful for the person who needs to be informed such as for a Minister or a Deputy Minister.
Canada School of Public Service	The Canada School of Public Service was created to address common learning needs of public service employees. The CFPS tailors its products and services specifically to meet the needs of public service employees at all levels of government.
Federal Government Department	Federal departments vary in size from small (fewer than 400 employees), to medium (400 to 3,000 employees) to large (more than 3,000 to almost 25,000 employees) (Public Service Commission, 2004). Examples: Indian and Northern Affairs, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, Health and Welfare Canada, Public Works and Government Services Canada.
Deployment	Movement of indeterminate (permanent) employee from one federal government department to another in the same group and level as in their previous department (transfer within the CFPS at the same group and level – not a promotion).

General Counsel	Each government department and agency has general counsel (lawyers) on staff for legal opinions concerning departmental issues.
Group and Level	All jobs in the CFPS are categorized as per their groups and there are several levels (i.e. salary increments within each group). For example, a person in the AS group (Administrative Services) can be an AS-01 up to an AS-08. The group is Administrative Services; the salary level they are at would be indicated by 01 up to 08 which are the levels.
Leave with Income Averaging (LIA)	Leave with Income Averaging (LIA) is a flexible working arrangement which allows indeterminate (permanent) employees, whose employer is Treasury Board Secretariat, to take blocks of leave without pay (LWOP) of between 5 weeks and 3 months, within a 12-month period that the LIA covers. The reduced rate of pay is then averaged and calculated over the 12 month period (Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2010).
Linguistic Profile	The linguistic profile summarizes English and French language qualifications for each of the three linguistic skills: reading, writing, and oral interaction. (Canadian Museum of Civilization, 2009).
Minister	The Minister is a Member of Parliament elected by the Canadian Public through national elections. This is a political position and they are at the top of the CFPS Hierarchy for each Federal Government Department.
Personnel Psychology Centre (PPC)	The Personnel Psychology Centre (PPC) of the Public Service Commission of Canada assesses employees and provides psychologists for assessment and executive coaching (Public Service Commission of Canada, October 30, 2009).
Privy Council Office	The Privy Council Office (PCO) provides impartial advice and support to the Prime Minister and Cabinet (Privy Council Office, 2010).
Secondment	An assignment of a CFPS employee to another federal department.
Student Bridging	A mechanism which is a staffing option provided to managers to facilitate the integration of students into positions in the federal public service after the completion of their educational program. One example is the Federal Student Work Experience Program (FSWEP) (Public Service Commission of Canada, November 24, 2010).

Treasury Board: The Department is responsible for accountability and ethics, financial, personnel and administrative management, comptrollership and approving regulations – It is the core public administration's employer.

APPENDIX B

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FORM

a) Demographic Information Form

Please respond to the following questions as they relate to you. All responses will be kept entirely confidential.

Name:

Address:

Telephone: Home: _____ Work:

E-Mail if I can communicate with you by e-mail:

Date of birth: _____ Place of Birth: _____

Highest Level of Education:

Years graduated from undergrad or graduate studies and from what university and degrees obtained:

Relationship Status:

Single ___ Married ___ Living with a partner ___ Divorced ___ Widowed ___

Other: Please indicate

Number of Children and Ages:

Background: African-American ___ Asian ___ Caucasian ___ Hispanic ___

Aboriginal ___

Other: Please Specify:

Present position in the CFPS – Group and Level

Current Department:

Please advise if you would like to keep your department anonymous. In this event it will not be mentioned – I will just state whether it is a large or small department in the CFPS.

APPENDIX C

GUIDING INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview 1: Purpose:	Cover the historical underpinnings, background, what impacted early on in career, how they came to be in the CFPS...career progression how it unfolded – allow participant free reign to talk about her career life history through timeline and artifacts.
Prompts (to be used throughout as appropriate): Why did you feel this was an important aspect of your career development? Why do you think you felt this way? If you could have changed what happened how would you have changed it? Can you tell me a little more about this feeling...aspect of your career? Can you tell me a little more about these challenges you faced – how did this make you feel? What you did about it? How did that make you feel? What did being	Can you tell me about your career life history in the CFPS? Start at the beginning from the time that you first entered the Public Service up until the present time. You may use your timeline as a reference to help you remember various important milestones or events in your career. You may also use any artifacts that you brought with you to explain what these things mean to you in the context of your public service career and why these artifacts are important to you. You can also tell me about things that were happening in other roles which might have had an impact upon your career at various times throughout your career life history...examples birth of a child or other pertinent events that happened that may have had an impacted upon your career in some way. Our lives are not linear so you can also go back if you think of something else afterwards...in other words you don't have to follow a straight timeline but can go back and forth as you think of things to add. Why do you think or feel this was an important aspect of your career development? You spoke about your parents having a great influence on your entering the public service...or in your career towards being an engineer or whatever they are - can you expand on that and tell me a little bit more about what things they said or did that may have influenced you that way? Do you have any regrets about the path you took or did not take? Wrap Up: What is your definition of career success? Do you feel that your career has been successful up until now? Why or why not? Is there anything else you might like to add to our interview today?

in this group; or working in this area mean to you?	Provide them a sheet of characteristics that the CFPS deem make good leaders (Appendix P) and ask them to reflect, for the next interview on these and whether they have these and/or other characteristics that may be different. Also how might their characteristics be different from those of men in the CFPS?
Interview 2:	
Purpose:	To explore, in depth, personal factors, traits or characteristics that were considered important to their career progression within the public service.
Prompts	To revisit whether participant wants to add anything to the transcripts from the last interview.
Continued:	To be tailored to expand upon the first interview or, if not mentioned, to address here.
You told me that.....can you expand upon that point a little more, can you tell me more about that...can you explain this another way?	You spoke in our first interview about certain characteristics that you felt you had that had helped you progress in your career. Some of these were..... .. – can you expand on these a little more for me as to how these have helped shape your career development? You may use what I gave you in the last interview to refer to what the CFPS consider are positive personal or organizational characteristics that make good leaders to tell me what characteristics you have that might have helped you in your career progression? Why or why not? (may be negative or positive traits) Are these traits the same as those of men who are good leaders?
Trait and Factor:	Explore similarities in management style men and women and traits and characteristics. Explore traits felt to be required which may not be in sync with their personal characteristics or values.
Career counseling	If spoke about these tools explore further. If not, bring up whether or not they have ever been assessed with MBTI, SII or JVIS or other career counseling tools.
Instruments	You spoke to me about your MBTI profile. What does this profile tell about you as a person....how does your personality profile link to the jobs that you have done in the past or are doing now? Are there things that your profile may have told you that you didn't already know? What are the positive or negative things you can tell me about as a result of having done your personality inventory? If they spoke about Types i.e. Myers-Briggs; JVIS; SII or others discuss these as they pertain to their individual personalities and how they see themselves. How have these tools helped them or caused problems for them in determining what jobs they might like?
Congruency:	

Self-Efficacy Theory	Were there events or occasions in your career when you felt 'you couldn't do or move forward' with a direction you wanted to take? Why? (may also be circumscription and compromise) What accomplishment or accomplishments have you had during your career with the CFPS that have made you proud or made you feel that you might have contributed in some way? Are there any regrets about any of the steps you made toward your career progression or things you felt you didn't or couldn't accomplish? Things you might have wanted to do but could not for a reason or another? What were some of the events or reasons why you did not follow the path you would have liked to? Have you ever been fearful about moving or changing jobs? Why do you think you felt this way? Have you ever had self-doubts about your competencies or in other areas which might have impacted upon your career?
Status Attainment Theory	If they spoke of how their parents' careers influenced their career path pursue that vein further...you spoke of your father being a ____did this influence you in your choice of career? If not: Did your parents' careers have anything to do with the path that you took for your own career? To what extent would you consider your mother or father's or someone else's career impact upon your own career choices? Did anyone else have an influence over your choice of careers? Are there things that happened early on or in your personal life that have impacted upon the path you have taken in your career development?
Circumscription & Compromise Theory	Tell me of a time when you felt really positive about moving forward in your career....what was special about you that made you feel that you could go ahead to accomplish whatever you set out to do... Review first interview for instances where this may have happened. i.e. You talked about wanting to be.....wanting to do.....being unable to do it, giving up....can you tell me a little bit more about this aspect of your career?

Interview 3: Purpose:	Are there times when you really wanted to do something in your career but for a reason or another that had nothing to do with your capability of being able to do it....that you decided to do something else? What was it and why did you change your mind? Review transcripts or questions from interview 2 – ask if they wish to add anything to revise. To explore ideas and discussion from previous interview regarding personal traits and characteristics and to move into merging personal and organizational factors which have enabled or hindered career progression and discuss how the CFPS as an organization views career development and advancement from the participant's point of view. Explore generally, educational background (from previous interviews); how has this helped and how does the organization perceive education? Move into Mentoring, Networking and Corporate Culture.
Education	If participant discusses education in first or second interviews – expand here. What kind of educational background did your parents have? Did their education have any impact upon your level of education? ...expand from there....Do you feel that your education is seen as being an important factor by the organization in helping you move forward to advance your career? Why/why not? You said previously that had you had a better education you might have risen up through the ranks faster? Can you expand upon that for me a bit more? Or You discussed having a certain level of education (review 1st or 2nd interview) How did your education provide you with enabling strategies to advance in your career....if hindered – how so? If participant did not discuss education in 1st interview I notice that you have not mentioned much about education throughout your career. Is there anything you might like to tell me about how you perceive education either helped or hindered you in your career aspirations or career progression?

	Would you consider obtaining other degrees, higher education, etc. – do you think that would help you attain a higher level in the CFPS?
Mentoring:	Do you or have you ever, in the past, had a mentor, advisor, counselor, or someone who helped you with your career? How did that person help you? Is this something that you feel is important to you and in what ways? Do you think that other women would benefit from having a mentor? What would be most beneficial, formal mentoring or informal mentoring? How did you begin your mentoring relationship? How did this help you? Are there formal mentoring programs in some of the departments that you have worked in? Have you ever taken part in formal mentoring programs? How did they work? Were they beneficial for you and how? If informal mentoring arrangements; how did you find your mentor or begin to be mentored...how did this help you in your career? Do you feel women need to be mentored in order to progress within the CFPS? Why would this be important – or not important?
Networking	Are you a member of any associations or committees related to your present or past jobs? Do you or have you in some of your jobs had an opportunity to network with colleagues either from your own or other departments? Do you feel that networking is an important aspect of career progression? If so, what impact or how has it helped you? If not, why is it not an important aspect of your career development and progression? Are there ever any times when something positive has come out of networking for you? Explain. Are there negative aspects of not being able to network with others that might impact upon your career progression?
Corporate Culture	You referred to instances where the corporate culture or hierarchical or masculine....CFPS culture hindered your career progression. You mentioned that you had suffered harassment at particular stages of your career...can you tell me more about that....what happened and how did this particular incident impact upon your career progression? Or any other corporate culture incidences that might have been mentioned in Interview 1....can you tell me more about You mentioned that your boss.....are you able to elaborate on that situation

	and how it affected your career? You spoke of being the only women in the boardroom and being asked to make coffee....how did you feel about this? Do you think this impacts on your career and how others see you in your role as manager? Or You spoke about your ideas being ignored but when a man reiterated the same thing that everyone thought it was a great idea.....can you talk to me more about this and how this type of behaviour by others might affect you personally? Explore how personal aspects of corporate culture affect you.
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APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW RECRUITMENT LETTER

Formal Letter of Invitation to Participate in the Study
(on Uof O letterhead)

Date:

Name:

Position:

Department:

Address:

Dear (name):

I am presently conducting a research study through the University of Ottawa as part of the requirement to obtain a Doctoral in Education. My study is entitled, "Career Development and Advancement of Women to Executive Levels in the Canadian Federal Public Service.

This study requires participation of women at the EX-one and EX-minus-01one levels within various departments in the Federal Public Service and participants in either group will be called 'Senior Managers'.

What are the objectives of the research?

Women aspiring to higher level executive positions face complex issues and competing demands but despite challenges of one sort or another, they have been very successful in their career progressions.

The purpose of this career life-history study is to explore the career progression of female senior managers in their transition toward higher executive levels. This study will attempt to make sense of complex issues, obstacles, challenges and successes of women who have progressed to the senior management level within the CFPS. I am interested in

exploring with them the myriad personal and professional factors that they believe have enabled or hindered their career progression.

Who will be conducting the research? This is my doctoral research project and I will be the only person who will be working with you to conduct the research, under the direction of my thesis advisor, Professor Janice Ahola-Sidaway of the University of Ottawa, Faculty of Education.

What will participants be required to do?

If you agree to participate in this research, I would ask that you complete a short demographic questionnaire about your status in the Public Service; age; marital status; etc. which would take approximately 10 minutes to complete. You will also be requested to complete a career life history timeline, in the format of your choice, with guidelines for you so that when we meet for interviews you will have a good idea of what we will be discussing. Three interviews of not more than one hour each will be required.

What does participation imply?

After each interview, you will have an opportunity to review the transcript of your interview, withdraw any comments and/or clarify or change the contents. The first interview will set the tone, aim to solicit a broad picture, and encourage you to tell your stories in a free-flowing and reflective manner while making sense of your career life stories within the context of the CFPS. The second interview will begin by clarifying issues or comments made during the first interview, and I will also ask you to reflect on your traits and characteristics that you believe may have shaped your career. The third interview will focus on organizational factors, particularly education, mentoring, networking and corporate culture that you believe may have impacted upon your career progression. This interview will also explore how personal characteristics and organizational factors may have intersected to help shape your career progression. The interviews will be tape-recorded in order that you may be provided with a transcript for review. Interviews will be held out of working hours and at a mutually convenient private location so as to protect the identity of participants.

You will also be asked to bring artifacts such as awards, documents, notes and so on, that you may have received throughout your career that you feel you might like to share during the telling of your stories about your career.

How will the data be treated?

All discussions are entirely private and any information collected will be completely confidential. Pseudonyms will be used in order that no participant be identified. I will be the only person to collect and access the data and will be transcribing the interview tapes myself. Direct quotes, with your permission, may be included in the research; however, no individual will be identified. Furthermore, anything that might identify you as a

participant will be altered or removed, and no individual identities will be available to anyone. .

What happens if you don't feel comfortable with the process once we have started?

You may withdraw from the process at any time, without fear of any repercussion whatsoever, and you need not provide any reason for withdrawal from the process. You also have the right to withdraw any comments that you would not like to have shared.

What would be the potential benefits of participating in this study?

I plan to investigate themes and patterns which women in the CFPS have experienced during the course of their careers and to examine what impact personal and organizational factors may have had on their career development and advancement. Through your stories and perceptions of how your career has unfolded, a significant contribution to the field of education may be made through the stories of career development and advancement of a cadre of women who are poised to be considered for succession planning purposes, given the dire situation of the CFPS losing many senior managers due to attrition in the next few years. Furthermore, your stories may provide insight into women's needs regarding career development strategies in the CFPS for Treasury Board; the Canada School of Public Service and policy-makers who may gain valuable information to help women manage their careers.

Universities and colleges will also benefit from the findings of the study in terms of educating career counselors and future public servants.

Thank you for considering taking part in this important research. Should you decide to participate in this study, please confirm your interest at your earliest convenience to me at any of the contact numbers listed below.

When using human subjects for interviewing purposes, The University of Ottawa, Research Ethics Review Board, is required to approve this research and I have obtained such permission. Should you have any questions regarding ethical conduct of this research please address your questions to the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research at _____. The University of Ottawa requires formal consent from participants in research studies. I have enclosed a copy of the approved consent form. When we meet to carry out your first interview, I will ask you to sign an identical consent form, which I am required to retain for my records.

Once you have contacted me to say that you are interested in participating in the study, I will arrange for the provision of the documentation you require to think about the study prior to our first interview and also arrange with you a mutually convenient time and place to meet to conduct the first interview.

I truly believe that you have great career life history stories to share with others about the context within which you have worked in the Canadian Federal Public Service and look forward to hearing your 'stories'.

Should you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Lynda Gray
Ph.D. Candidate

APPENDIX E

CONSENT FORM

Consent Form (on U of O letterhead)

Title of the Study: **Career Development and Advancement of Women to Executive Level in the Canadian Federal Public Service (CFPS)**

Name of the Researcher: Lynda Gray, PhD Candidate, Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa

Thesis Advisor: Janice Ahola-Sidaway, Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa _____. Invitation to Participate: I am invited to participate in the aforementioned research study conducted by Lynda Gray

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of the study is to explore the career Progression of female senior managers in their transition toward higher executive levels in the CFPS.

Participation: My participation will consist essentially of completing a demographic questionnaire; bringing artifacts that I associate with my career development and advancement in the CFPS; completing a career life history timeline to enable prior knowledge of what will be discussed during subsequent interviews. There will be three one-hour audio-taped interviews. The interviews will take place in a private location at a mutually convenient time and place. I will also have the opportunity to review transcripts of the interview and, if I so choose, to provide feedback, clarification or revision to them.

Benefits: My participation in this study will benefit other women who aspire to reaching senior executive levels; may provide insight into themes in career development that are specific to women for career counsellors, policy-makers and the employer in order to make changes necessary to attract and recruit future women to the CFPS. Universities and colleges responsible for educating career counsellors

and future public servants will also benefit from hearing from experienced women regarding career development needs.

Confidentiality and

I have received assurance from the researcher that the Anonymity: information I will share will remain strictly confidential and that my name will not appear in any publications. I will be identified by the use of a pseudonym so that my name does not appear anywhere and alterations of minor context details in the publishing of findings will help ensure full anonymity. The final report will be written in such a way as to conceal my identity. Finally, I understand that the data will be kept in a secure manner and will be destroyed five years after publication of the findings.

Conservation of Data: All data that are collected as part of this research will be kept locked in a filing cabinet in the researcher's home specifically for the purpose of storing this material away from any workplaces which might compromise participants' anonymity. The material will be kept for 5 years and then destroyed.

Compensation:

No compensation will be provided.

Voluntary Participation: I am under no obligation to participate and if I choose to participate, I may withdraw at any time from the study, refuse to answer any questions, or remove information that I have freely given without suffering any negative consequences. Furthermore, should I choose to withdraw from the study, my contribution (i.e., data) will be destroyed at my request.

Acceptance: I, _____, agree to participate in the above research study conducted by Lynda Gray of the Department of Education; Faculty of Education under which the researcher is supervised by Dr. Janice Ahola-Sidaway, Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa.

If I have any questions about the study, I may contact the researcher or her supervisor.

If I have any questions regarding the ethical conduct of this study, I may contact the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, University of Ottawa, _____
There are two copies of the consent form, one of which is mine to keep.

Participant's Signature _____

Date: _____

Researcher's Signature _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX F

RECRUITMENT POSTER ENGLISH

PhD Research Study

Women Participants Needed

Are you an EX minus one or EX one in a Federal Government Department?

I am a PhD student at the University of Ottawa and am seeking participants to explore and share stories about their career life history in the Canadian Federal Public Service. I am seeking a diverse sample of individuals—for example, of different ages, from various employment equity groups, of different sexual orientations, and with different family compositions. Interviews will be conducted in English.

This study has been approved by the Research Ethics Board of the University of Ottawa.

Anonymity and confidentiality are ensured. If you would like to learn more about this study and what your participation would involve, please email _____

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