



Review

Examining theoretical approaches to men and masculinity in the context of high-risk work: Applications, benefits and challenges



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ABSTRACT

In this paper, we argue that it is important to understand how gender can influence men's occupational health and safety (OH&S). In doing so, we examine how a number of theoretical approaches and perspectives (i.e. a gender differences approach, hegemonic masculinity theory, embodiment theory, and intersectional approaches) have been applied to understanding men's OH&S in high risk work contexts. We discuss the conceptual underpinnings of each approach while examining how they have been applied to understanding men's OH&S. We then consider both the benefits and the challenges associated with each approach. We conclude with recommendations for how these approaches and perspectives might best be used within the context of OH&S research and highlight the key questions that each theoretical approach appears to be best suited to address. A gender differences approach may be most beneficial when we wish to understand the factors that lead to similarities and differences between men and women's work experiences. Hegemonic masculinities theory may be best suited to studying how workplace cultures become gendered and can influence power relations in the workplace, and embodiment theory to understand how gender is enacted and experienced at a bodily level and influence men's OH&S practices. Intersectional approaches can shed light on the ways in which race/ethnicity, class, and social inequalities may intersect with gender to influence OH&S.

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1. Introduction

Over the course of recent years, scholars in the field of occupational health and safety (OH&S) have paid more attention to gender in the context of high risk work (Jensen et al., 2014). While there is an existing scientific literature on gender in this field, most of it tends to adopt what is known as a “gender differences” approach. The pervasiveness of the gender differences approach can be seen, for instance, in the way that rates of injury and fatality are presented dichotomously for men and women. The gender differences approach relies on the assumption that the categories of man and woman are oppositional in nature and, by extension, that more can be learned by examining their differences than their similarities. For example, a review of the OH&S literature indicates that, in Canada, 97% of the victims of workplace fatalities between 1993 and 2005 were men (Bilsker et al., 2010). In 2012, 92% of all injured workers in the US and 96% in Australia were men (US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013; Safe Work Australia, 2012).

Scholars in the field have proposed a variety of different explanations to account for the OH&S risks to which many men are exposed. For example, men may be exposed to risks due to the gendered segregation of occupations and, more specifically, the gendered division of labour within specific occupations (Messing et al., 2003; Courtenay, 2000; Du Plessis et al., 2013; Ibanez and Narocki, 2011). Gendered segregation is especially evident in high risk occupations, such as construction, electrical work, farming, firefighting, fishing, forestry and protective services (Messing et al., 2003; Ibanez and Narocki, 2011; Arcury et al., 2014; Breslin and Polzer, 2007; Desmond, 2006; Lawson, 2010; Phakathi, 2013; Power and Baqee, 2010). These occupations are characterized by a relatively high incidence of exposure to both the mental and physical risks associated with workplace hazards. What is more, many scholars have suggested that men may be expected to display prototypical masculine traits that include physical toughness and fearlessness in the face of danger and, as a result, may put themselves at greater risk in the workplace (Safe Work Australia, 2012; Ely and Meyerson, 2010; Power, 2008; Verdonk et al., 2010; Ness, 2012).

While the statistics presented above indicate that men may be the victims of a disproportionately large number of workplace accidents, a gender differences approach to OH&S may not be enough to help us understand the complex interplay of contextual factors that influence men’s exposure to risk. OH&S risks can be further exacerbated by the under-reporting of hazards, accidents and injuries (Breslin and Polzer, 2007; Lawson, 2010; Power, 2008), poor adherence to the use of protective equipment (Ibanez and Narocki, 2011; Arcury et al., 2014), and a tendency to sacrifice

health and safety to “get the job done” (Desmond, 2006; Phakathi, 2013; Arcury et al., 2014; Power and Baqee, 2010; Theberge, 2008). Furthermore, high-risk work is frequently characterized by economic incentives such as piecework, high wages for physically demanding and dangerous work, competitive tendering processes, and an institutional focus on profits before safety (Desmond, 2006; Phakathi, 2013; Power, 2008). Paap (2006) argues that the precarious position of construction workers in the current labour market encourages competition among workers, compromises adherence to health and safety policies and practices, and produces situations where workers perform “masculinities” in ways that privilege productivity over safety in order to gain the approval of employers. Thus, a more in-depth understanding of men’s OH&S may require that we go beyond a gender differences approach in order to consider other contextual factors that influence risk exposures and safety practices.

Our paper emerges out of a previously published article over the course of which we presented a critical review of the scientific literature that focuses on the intersection between men’s health, gender and OH&S. To ensure that a breadth of disciplinary perspectives were included, relevant articles were identified through exhaustive searches of nine data bases and included research from the health and medical sciences, psychology, sociology, gender studies and, of course, OH&S studies. For more details on the methodological approach used in the initial review, as well as its key findings, please see Stergiou-Kita et al., 2015. This initial review included evidence from 96 papers (75 qualitative, 18 quantitative, and 3 mixed methods published between 1986 and 2013), and focused predominately on high risk male-dominated occupations such as agriculture, farming, construction, mining, fish harvesting, oil refinery, firefighting, protective services, policing, security work, the military and professional sports. We found that while some OH&S studies have documented gender differences in relation to risk, few explicitly draw on contemporary theoretical approaches in order to better understand gender-related issues, the similarities between and amongst gender categories, as well as the key differences between them.

We agree with Jensen et al.’s (2014) claim that theorizing gender is important to improving OH&S in the workplace. More specifically, we suggest that using a gendered theoretical approach in the development, implementation, and interpretation of scholarly research can lead to a richer understanding of the complex factors that influence men’s OH&S. For example, how might the application of hegemonic masculinity theory help researchers to understand how gendered power relations in the workplace influence men’s OH&S? Similarly, how might the application of an intersectional approach assist us in better understanding the interplay of gender

and other cross-cutting social categories—such as race, class, ethnicity and sexuality—in the development of risky workplace cultures?

The current paper presents an expanded critical analysis of the evidence collected for our initial review (Stergiou-Kita et al., 2015) for two reasons: first, to encourage researchers to apply gendered theoretical frameworks to their research on OH&S in the future; and second, to better understand how theoretical approaches have been applied to the study of men, masculinity and OH&S in the past. The paper also seeks to elucidate the lessons learned from these applications as well as the benefits and challenges associated with each. Ultimately, the paper aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the state of the field and, in doing so, to encourage further applications of contemporary theories that go beyond a gender differences approach to the study of OH&S.

2. Method

Our sample of evidence for this review includes articles that examine OH&S issues in high risk work contexts and are characterized by an empirical method (i.e. quantitative, qualitative, or mixed); a strong focus on gender (i.e. explicit discussions about or problematizations of the social construction of gender); and/or the use of a gendered theoretical approach (e.g. hegemonic masculinity theory, embodiment theory or intersectional theory). We excluded articles that did not report on the collection of original data. Similarly, because we wanted to focus very clearly on men's occupational health, we excluded gender-related articles that did not explicitly examine OH&S issues. Using the above inclusion and exclusion criteria, we identified 35 articles for further review. Articles were subsequently grouped into one of the following four categories, informed by the most frequently applied approaches in the articles reviewed: (1) gender differences ($n = 13$); (2) hegemonic masculinity ($n = 5$); (3) embodiment ($n = 8$); and (4) intersectionality ($n = 9$). Some of the articles fit into more than one category. In these instances, we assigned articles according to the approach with which they were most closely aligned. For example, Monaghan's article "Hard men, shop boys and others: embodying competence in a masculinist occupation" discusses the production and reproduction of a hierarchical range of masculine identities and practices in the nighttime economy of "bouncers," where traits such as stoicism, strength, and the denial of weakness are highly privileged and rewarded. While the article's emphasis on these traits made it a contender for the hegemonic masculinity theory category, the overarching theoretical focus was on the body and the embodied constructions of plural masculinities. As a result, we assigned it to the embodiment category rather than the hegemonic masculinity category.

In reviewing each theoretical approach, we aimed to answer the following questions as they relate to men's OH&S in high risk workplaces: (1) How has the approach been applied? (2) What are the benefits of the approach and what has it helped us to understand? and (3) What are the challenges associated with the application of each approach? In what follows, we describe the conceptual underpinnings of each approach, the nature of its application within the articles we reviewed, and the benefits and challenges associated with each. We conclude with specific recommendations for enhancing the application of the approaches reviewed in the article and highlight key research questions that each may be best suited to address.

3. Gender differences approach

3.1. Description and conceptual underpinnings

A gender differences approach focuses on comparing men and women with respect to various dimensions, intervening factors

and outcomes. In the context of health research, this approach arose out of a concern that women were disproportionately under-represented in research studies because men were assumed to be the "norm" and, by extension, findings from studies of men were generalizable to women (Hammerstrom and Annandale, 2012). This led to the development of "gender-specific medicine" and a requirement from national funding agencies—such as the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR)—that scholars indicate exactly how they plan to incorporate gender analysis into their research (CIHR, 2016).

In the context of the current study, the gender differences approach was employed to compare men and women in relation to their work choices, behaviours and experiences as well as to examine resulting OH&S outcomes. Informed by a more objectivist perspective, a gender differences approach assumes that reality is objectively verifiable and, more specifically, that by examining the interplay of various factors and controlling for intervening factors, researchers are in a position to be able to identify what may account for men's and women's differing work experiences and OH&S outcomes. The levels of analysis most characteristic of a gender differences approach have tended to focus on identifying individual (micro-level) and workplace (meso-level) elements that can assist in explaining workplace risks, hazards, accidents, and health outcomes.

3.2. Study characteristics

In keeping with its tendency to present its findings in dichotomous terms, the gender differences approach was used in thirteen of the articles included in our sample and focused on differences between men and women in relation to work, general health and morbidity (Emslie et al., 1999); psychological health and well-being (Evans and Steptoe, 2002); workplace stress (Evans and Steptoe, 2002; Iwasaki et al., 2004; Loosemore and Waters, 2004; Peterson, 2004); sickness absence (Laaksonen et al., 2010); risk taking behaviours (Harrell, 1986); exposure to work-based hazards (Leijon et al., 2005; Messing et al., 2009); and rates of workplace accidents, injuries and/or illnesses (Harrell, 1986; Messing et al., 1994; Taiwo et al., 2009; Wirtz et al., 2012). The majority of the articles used quantitative methods ($n = 11$) and included either: (1) the retrospective analysis of health (Messing et al., 2009; Wirtz et al., 2012), workers' compensation (Messing et al., 1994) or employer-specific data (Laaksonen et al., 2010; Taiwo et al., 2009) to understand occupational risk; or (2) the collection of data using survey methods to gain an understanding of injury patterns or workers' experiences of workplace stress across occupations such as banking, construction and management (Emslie et al., 1999; Evans and Steptoe, 2002; Loosemore and Waters, 2004). Only two articles used qualitative methods. The first used focus groups to examine differences in how men and women in management positions experience work-related stress (Iwasaki et al., 2004), and the second used interviews and observations to examine the work experiences of men and women in the Australian fishing industry (Stella, 1996).

3.3. Benefits

The application of a gender differences approach allows us to understand how men and women may be exposed to different OH&S risks. For example, it allows us to claim that, in general, men are exposed to greater risks where workplace injuries are concerned (Taiwo et al., 2009; Wirtz et al., 2012). This is due both to men's willingness to ascribe to masculine norms of behaviour and, in doing so, accept greater risks (Harrell, 1986; Stella, 1996) as well as to the gender-segregated nature of work (Laaksonen et al., 2010; Leijon et al., 2005). Labour market segregation occurs

at both horizontal levels (i.e., segregation of men and women into different types of occupations) and vertical levels (i.e., segregation of men and women based on hierarchies within an occupation) (Leijon et al., 2005), creating situations where men and women often end up working in different occupations (e.g. women are more likely to work in service and health care sectors while men are more typically found in management positions), putting in different hours (e.g. women may work longer hours when taking into account additional domestic workloads) (Wirtz et al., 2012), and completing different job tasks within the same occupation or job title (e.g. men assigned to more physically demanding tasks and women to more detailed work) (Messing et al., 1994).

The gendered division of labour can also lead to the development of differing health conditions (Messing et al., 2009). For example, a greater incidence of musculoskeletal diagnoses is noted amongst women and is associated with the greater likelihood that women work in service and health-care sectors (Laaksonen et al., 2010; Messing et al., 2009). Women may also experience greater injury risks compared to men when completing similar job tasks due to anthropometric differences (e.g. height, weight, physical capacity); work stations that are poorly designed for women; and because they receive less safety training and have less control over their work tasks than men typically do, as evidenced by injury patterns among men and women who work in heavy manufacturing (Taiwo et al., 2009).

Men and women may be exposed to different types of work stressors or job strains and may experience work-related stress and workplace supports differently (Iwasaki et al., 2004; Loosemore and Waters, 2004). For example, examining gender differences in experiences of work stress within the construction industry, Loosemore and Waters (2004) reveal that men experience stress because of risk-taking behaviours or when managing disciplinary issues (as they are more likely to be involved in a management role), whereas women report stress associated with lower pay and poorly defined career advancement opportunities. Women may also experience stress in relation to the fact that their jobs are seen as low status and low authority (Leijon et al., 2005). What is more, men and women who work in jobs where they are a gender minority may also be more vulnerable to stress-related problems (Evans and Steptoe, 2002). And finally, men and women may value different elements of work, with men placing greater value on high pay, status and job security, and women on recognition and their interpersonal relations at work (Peterson, 2004).

While we do not feel that a gender differences approach is sufficient in and of itself, we recognise that it is nevertheless important. More often than not, gender is constructed, experienced and understood in dichotomous terms in modern Western societies and the result is often differences in opportunities for men and women. There are, therefore, important things to be gleaned from a gender differences approach, such as how men and women may be exposed to differing work stressors, OH&S risks and health outcomes.

3.4. Challenges

While this approach allows us to gain a better understanding of some of the key differences between men and women in OH&S contexts, many scholars have cautioned against a focus on gender differences alone. Emslie et al. (1999) have argued that failing to consider similarities between and differences within gender categories may give rise to a false sense of the significance of gender differences. For example, when investigating gender differences in minor health-related morbidities amongst men and women who held the same job in the same organization, Emslie et al. (1999) found that gender alone only accounted for 1% of the variance in reported outcomes. They conclude that gender may play

more of an intermediary, as opposed to a primary, role in men's and women's OH&S outcomes. The situation may be further complicated by a reporting bias or, put differently, the fact that studies which reveal gender differences are more likely to be published than those with few, insignificant or no gender differences to report (Emslie et al., 1999). What is more, many of the articles in the gender differences category used self-reporting and survey methods to examine differences between men and women, thereby introducing several additional biases into the research design: (1) participants' desires to present a socially desirable gendered image may increase reporting biases; and (2) findings from survey questions may be interpreted differently. This is certainly the case in Peterson's article (2004), which explores what men and women value most at work. The authors conclude that men are motivated by power and status, while women are driven by recognition for what they do. It is, however, unclear whether women were really in a position to perceive recognition for their work as a primary symbol of power due to differing gender socialization patterns.

4. Hegemonic masculinity theory

4.1. Description and conceptual underpinnings

Developed by Australian sociologist Connell (e.g., 1987, 1995), hegemonic masculinity theory (HMT) defines masculinity as a configuration of practices that are both produced by and productive of gender identities and relations. A number of general principles characterize contemporary understandings and applications of HMT, such as: (1) masculinities are plural insofar as they are influenced by sociocultural factors and are dependent on other aspects of identity and wider social structures; (2) men's identities are constituted in and through a hierarchical range of masculinities and associated practices, which become culturally idealized over time; (3) the most idealized and, by extension, hegemonic forms of masculinity are characterized by traits such as stoicism, resilience and the denial of weakness; and (4) many men attempt, with varying degrees of success, to emulate these hegemonic forms in order to appear successful, capable and in control.

HMT provides researchers with a framework for thinking critically about the power-related operations and effects of the social construction of masculinity. The framework relies on the dual assumption that modern Western societies are characterized by the dominance of men over women as well as the dominance of some groups of men over other groups of men (Connell, 1987, pp. 183–186). It is hierarchically organized and consists of four types of masculinity: hegemonic, complicit, subordinated and marginalized (Connell, 1995, pp. 76–81). The hegemonic type is the most socially ascendant and culturally exalted and is usually associated with conquering women, exhibiting strength and toughness, rejecting that which is female or feminine, striving for status and success, and taking risks (Connell, 1987, p. 184, 1995, pp. 77–78). Men who are of the subordinated or marginalized types—that is, homosexual men and men of colour—are either incompatible with hegemonic masculinity or excluded from it altogether (Connell, 1995, 78–81). HMT allows us to analyze the structural workings of meso- and macro-level phenomena but is often unable to account for the individual complexities of micro-level phenomena (Coles, 2009; Moller, 2007), a point to which we return below.

4.2. Study characteristics

HMT was applied in 5 articles examining OH&S in high risk male-dominated occupations such as the construction industry

(Iacuone, 2005); the mining industry (Somerville, 2005); the fire-fighting sector (Pacholok, 2009); high performance sport (Anderson and Kian, 2012); and working-class manual labour (Dolan, 2013). In four articles, the study populations consist of men and use qualitative approaches such as ethnographic observation (Somerville, 2005), in-depth semi-structured interviews (Dolan, 2013) or a combination of the two (Iacuone, 2005; Pacholok, 2009). The remaining article consists of a text-based thematic analysis (Anderson and Kian, 2012). The studies were conducted in a variety of Western countries, such as Australia (Iacuone, 2005; Somerville, 2005); Canada (Pacholok, 2009); the United Kingdom (Dolan, 2013) and the United States (Anderson and Kian, 2012). Four of the articles define and apply HMT in explicit terms (Iacuone, 2005; Pacholok, 2009; Anderson and Kian, 2012; Dolan, 2013) while one relies on the key terms and concepts associated with HMT (i.e. hegemonic, complicit, marginalized, subordinated) without operationalizing them in any way (Somerville, 2005).

4.3. Benefits

The studies that involved human subjects (Iacuone, 2005; Somerville, 2005; Pacholok, 2009; Dolan, 2013) suggest that HMT is a useful way of understanding how the social construction of masculinity gives rise to specific “configurations of practice” within the context of high risk workplaces (Connell, 1995, pp. 71–73). These configurations consist of practices such as “domination, aggressiveness, competitiveness, athletic prowess, stoicism, and control” (Iacuone, p. 253). For example, Iacuone’s (2005) study of Australian building sites finds that they tend to be characterized by sexist attitudes towards women, predatory girl-watching, homophobic name-calling, ongoing risk-taking, hazardous horse-play and excessive alcohol consumption. Similarly, he finds that these practices result in a “gender hierarchy” or an “informal power matrix” (2005, p. 247) that “influences builders’ perceptions of OH&S” so that they become more concerned with their place in the workplace pecking order and “less concerned about their welfare” (p. 248). Like Iacuone (2005), Somerville’s (2005) study of Australian mining workplace cultures shows that they are characterized by hegemonically masculine practices such as “violence and aggression, risk taking and competitiveness” (p. 5).

Taking a different approach, Pacholok (2009) deepens our understanding of how hegemonic masculinity is used to construct and maintain inter-group boundaries among firefighters in Western Canada. She (2009) considers how hegemonically masculine practices are bound up with boundary work—that is, “the mechanisms through which workers’ efforts to negotiate status hierarchies are translated into differential costs and rewards” (p. 496)—as well as with what she calls “comparative strategies of self” (p. 472). Pacholok’s findings suggest that both the boundary work and the comparative strategies of self which are put into practice by various groups of firefighters are not only constituted by but also constitutive of hegemonically masculine configurations of practice characterized by emotionlessness, tough-mindedness, fearlessness and heroism.

In a more recent article, Dolan (2013) draws on HMT in order to make sense of how manual labourers understand their health-related practices. While his study participants displayed many of the traits associated with hegemonic masculinity, he argues that these displays must be understood within the context of the larger political and economic realities of working-class men’s lives that include ongoing job scarcity and the constant threat of unemployment. With respect to OH&S, Dolan reveals that many of his participants “felt they had little choice but to take risks associated with their employment, despite being frightened by certain working practices” (p. 9). Dolan’s (2013) use of HMT helps us to understand

the complexity of men’s workplace behaviour by demonstrating that what might appear to be little more than hegemonically masculine configurations of practice are, in fact, representative of more complex “decision making” and “trade offs” that are inextricably linked to broader structural forces over which his participants have little to no control (p. 9).

Like the workplace cultures associated with manual labour, those associated with high performance sport in general and American football in particular have long been linked to hegemonic masculinity. With their “no pain, no gain” attitude and their tendency to glorify those who sacrifice their injured bodies for the good of the game, professional football players—as well as those who comment on their performances—have tended to be critical of those who withdraw from play on account of injury. Anderson and Kian (2012) apply HMT to media coverage of a star football player who self-withdrew from further play following a head hit. Interestingly, their findings suggest that the coverage did not tend to represent the player’s self-withdrawal in hegemonically masculine terms. Instead, it lavished praise on the player for making the healthy choice. While Anderson and Kian’s findings contradict some of the key tenets of HMT, the application of the theory is useful nonetheless insofar as it helps us to understand why athletes’ self-withdrawal from sporting events on account of injury has been viewed with suspicion in the past, thereby providing a relevant contextualization of this changing phenomenon.

4.4. Challenges

Despite their many benefits, applications of HMT are not without their challenges. Based on the studies we reviewed, these challenges can be summarized as follows: (1) HMT appears to generate highly consistent findings regardless of the study’s research question or design; (2) HMT sometimes seems to ignore the meanings that study participants attribute to their own experiences; and (3) HMT cannot account for micro-level phenomena and, as a result, does not allow for an in-depth examination of men’s lived experiences of OH&S.

To start, all of the studies involving human subjects not only reported similar findings but also interpreted these findings in similar ways. For instance, Pacholok’s (2009) findings are grouped into thematic categories that strongly resemble those used by Iacuone (2005) and Somerville (2005) such as “calm and reliable in crisis” (p. 489), “aggression and risk taking” (p. 491) and “repudiating the feminine” (p. 492). To be sure, the authors of the articles we review appear to vary in terms of how they engage with HMT: some apply parts of Connell’s original framework without adjusting them in any way (Iacuone, 2005; Pacholok, 2009) while others take a more critical approach (Somerville, 2005). Yet even despite Somerville’s (2005) more critical use of HMT, her findings do not differ in any substantive way from those presented by Iacuone and Pacholok. It could be argued that the unusually similar nature of the findings is due, at least in part, to the fact that all of the authors of the studies in question organized their analyses around the hegemonic type of masculinity while for the most part ignoring the other three types. In this way, the studies applied HMT in what can only be described as an incomplete manner and, in doing so, made it appear as though the contexts they examined were characterized by nothing but hegemonic masculinity or the quest for it. More attention to the other types of masculinity is required in order to ensure that the full potential of HMT is realized in OH&S scholarship.

Similarly, applications of HMT sometimes seem to ignore the meanings that study participants attribute to their own experiences, particularly when these meanings are at odds with the key tenets of HMT. In Pacholok’s (2009) case, this becomes especially obvious when she argues that one of her participants “im-

plicitly” suggests that “those who are willing to take those risks are the most masculine” (p. 491) while, in Dolan’s case, it becomes particularly clear when he argues that the participants in his study refrained from discussing their employment-related concerns with their female partners in order to “sustain power within their relationships” and “maintain their status as the dominant partner” (p. 13). In both cases, the study participants provide different explanations for their behaviour, but these are dismissed in favour of those that correspond more clearly with HMT.

Our review appears to confirm Moller’s claim (2007) that HMT tends to “obscure the researcher’s ability to see masculinity in any terms other than ‘political’” (p. 264). In this way, it is unable to fully come to grips with the emotional complexities of men’s lives as they are lived in the context of high risk work. Ultimately, HMT is so focused on how men working in high risk occupations reproduce hegemonically masculine configurations of practice that it fails to consider their experiences of pain, suffering and vulnerability and how these might relate to issues of OH&S (Moller, 2007, p. 271).

5. Embodiment theory

5.1. Description and conceptual underpinnings

The notion of “embodiment” refers to the processes through which social locations (e.g., class, ethnicity, gender, generation, geographic location, nationality) and the collective values with which they are associated become embedded in the flesh and blood body (Monaghan, 2003; Power, 2008). Closely connected to the notion of embodiment is the notion of “habitus,” which, according to French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, refers to how individual histories and collective cultures shape the body and mind and, as a result, shape social action within particular “fields” like the workplace. For Bourdieu, fields are structured systems of social hierarchies (i.e., relations of domination and subordination) constituted by specific types of “capital” (Swartz, 1997). Individuals accumulate, embody and come to be located or positioned by economic (e.g. wealth, income, property, time), social (e.g. supportive networks, personal connections), cultural (e.g. knowledge, skills, educational credentials) and symbolic (e.g., distinction, prestige) capital (Bourdieu, 1986).

Through the interconnected concepts of embodiment, habitus, field and capital, the body is seen to both incorporate and reproduce history but is also seen to be produced in and through social interactions. More specifically, social interactions elicit responses that influence an individual’s view of the world as well as his or her action within a specific field. This, in turn, creates lasting dispositions and structures how individuals come to think, feel and act in a variety of subconscious ways. Social interactions can thus be seen to shape the individual’s expectations of others insofar as he or she comes to expect those around him or her to behave in ways that will maintain the flow of social life and further reinforce the deep-seated and largely subconscious attitudes that underpin group identity (Bourdieu, 1998).

From an embodiment perspective, reality extends beyond what is consciously known by the individual. Strong emphasis is placed on making sense of reality through understanding the relationship between culture and the broader social relations and structures that influence an individual’s actions, beliefs and opportunities (Csordas, 1990; Lock, 1993; Malmstrom, 2012; McNay, 2004). The embodiment perspective thus allows us to understand the relationship between where individuals are socially situated and the social values they come to embody, offering a lens through which to explore the long term operations and effects of behavioural patterns (McNay, 1999; Thorpe, 2009).

Embodiment theory assumes that knowledge is subjectively generated and located (Lock, 1993; Williams and Bendelow, 1998). It seeks to better understand the social world by foregrounding lived experiences and considers the “everyday” as a bona fide site of knowledge production. With its focus on both individual lived experiences and broader social structures, embodiment theory allows researchers to “zoom in” to individual contexts but also to “zoom out” in order to scan the horizon of the social world. In other words, while embodiment theory begins with the micro-level worlds of individual actors and their interactions with others, it also addresses the broader meso-level (e.g., workplace) and macro-level (e.g., society and culture) factors that contribute to the process of embodiment.

5.2. Study characteristics

Embodiment theory was applied in eight articles. All of the articles take a qualitative approach or mixed methods approach and included methods such as ethnographic observation (Desmond, 2006; King, 2007; Monaghan, 2002a, 2002b, 2003, 2004), interviews (Ajslev et al., 2013; Power, 2008), focus groups (Power, 2008), and occupational site visits (Power, 2008). The articles focus on a wide variety of geographical and occupational contexts including: boat skippers and their young deckhands in the Australian shark fishing industry (King, 2007); “bouncers” and door supervisors at British nightclubs (Monaghan, 2002a, 2002b, 2003, 2004); construction workers in the Danish construction industry (Ajslev et al., 2013); fish harvesters from Newfoundland and Labrador on Canada’s east coast (Power, 2008); and wildland firefighters employed by the US Forest Service (Desmond, 2006). The concepts of embodiment and habitus, in particular, were applied in order to examine voluntary and workplace-imposed occupational risks (Desmond, 2006; Monaghan, 2003, 2004); perceptions of safety and risk (Power, 2008); gendered constructions of workplace competency (King, 2007; Monaghan, 2002a, 2002b); and work, health and morbidity (Ajslev et al., 2013).

5.3. Benefits

Embodiment approaches were applied in the articles to examine how risk-related workplace decisions are often made subconsciously and are, therefore, difficult to fully translate into verbal accounts. Embodiment theory provides an alternative to the dominant literature on masculinity that conceptualizes risk and risk-taking as either a calculated component of the performance of masculinity or an entirely conscious decision. Embodiment theory’s emphasis on practice over rational decision-making allows the researcher to appreciate the risks that might be difficult for study participants to put into words (Ajslev et al., 2013; King, 2007) and, in doing so, allows for an improved understanding of the complex pathways through which risk is normalized and routinized by workers in their everyday occupational contexts. Reflecting on how an individual’s social location can become embedded in the body, Desmond (2006) explores how firefighters acclimate to the universe of wildland firefighting by focusing on how masculine dispositions and skills acquired from rural working-class upbringings (e.g., physical strength and tough-mindedness) become connected to the organizational “common sense” of the US forest service (e.g., encouragement of risk-taking and fearlessness in the face of danger). These connections illuminate the ways in which some men come to not only accept but also welcome risk in occupational contexts.

Generally speaking, each of the articles in this category explores occupations in which there is a tendency to ‘screen out’ awareness of physical danger and disregard risks to the body’s health and safety. In occupations such as construction, firefighting, nightclub

security, and fish harvesting, ignoring health and safety is built right into the workplace culture and is often taken as a sign of true commitment. Focusing more specifically on how workplace cultures become embedded in the bodies of men, some authors (Ajslev et al., 2013; King, 2007; Monaghan, 2002a, 2002b, 2003, 2004) explore how recurring social interactions within highly masculinized workplaces create dispositions that lead workers to act in specific (e.g., risky) ways that become habitual within that field (e.g., the workplace). Often enacted subconsciously, these risky practices become so deeply embodied in the worker that they come to be perceived as natural and inevitable. Thus, what some might see as job-appropriate actions and experiences are, in part, derived from broader workplace discourse around masculinity and its correlates (e.g. the narrative of fearlessness and acceptance of risk-taking). This can limit the amount of capital and related dispositions at the disposal of male workers in high risk occupations to exercise safer alternatives. Embodiment approaches thus allow us to better understand why safety policies that counter habitual patterns of behaviour are sometimes met with resistance. This is captured in Ajslev et al. (2013), Desmond (2006), Power (2008), and Monaghan's (2004) discussions of the discord between workers' "common sense" perceptions of risk and those adopted by regulatory or legal organizations seeking to "manage" it. These discussions also reveal how institutional policies aimed at preventing risk are less likely to be accepted when they deviate from the workers' own embodied knowledge.

The application of embodiment theory provides opportunities to break away from perspectives that explore gender at the expense of other social locations. For instance, Desmond (2006) shows how the working-class rural backgrounds of wildland firefighters acclimatize them to occupational risk-taking in ways that do not apply to "city boys." In doing so, he makes clear that not all gendered bodies are experienced and enacted in the same way. Put differently, embodiment approaches allow us to go beyond conceptualizations of hegemonic masculinity in order to better appreciate the complex, and sometimes contradictory, relationships between men's identities and bodies on the one hand and workplace risks on the other.

5.4. Challenges

While embodiment approaches can increase our understanding of occupational risk, there are challenges associated with their application in the articles we reviewed. To start, there is little discussion of the theoretical foundations of these approaches in many of the articles. It is, therefore, difficult to fully appreciate how they were applied. What is more, there was a tendency to "cherry-pick" from the theories themselves. For instance, among the articles that applied the concept of habitus, few incorporated other key elements of Bourdieu's broader framework (e.g., field and capital). An expanded exploration of the relationship between habitus, field and capital might help us better understand how and why men choose to engage in occupational risk-taking; in other words, it might allow us to see that workers take risks not only because they wish to uphold pre-conceived notions of masculinity but also because doing so allows them to secure a more powerful position within a particular field—in this case, a masculinized workplace context—and to accumulate symbolic and economic capital.

6. Intersectional approaches

6.1. Description and conceptual underpinnings

While there is no clear consensus on the definition of intersectionality, there is nevertheless some agreement among leading

scholars that intersectional approaches assume "that race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation, ability, and age operate not as unitary, mutually exclusive entities, but as reciprocally constructing phenomena that in turn shape complex social inequalities" (Collins, 2015, p. 2). Intersectionality, then, is not a gender theory per se; instead, gender is understood as both produced by and productive of its relationships to other social categories. And it is these relationships between categories, rather than just the categories themselves, that are seen to result in social inequalities.

Relevant scholarship suggests that three main approaches tend to characterize applications of intersectionality (Choo and Ferree, 2010; Collins, 2015; Jones et al., 2013; McCall, 2005). The first approach seeks to understand reality by examining the lives of a group, usually a group that has been either ignored or marginalized. Representative examples include Choo and Ferree's "group-centred model" (2010); Collins's "identity" approach (2015); and McCall's "intra-categorical approach" (2005). Researchers using this approach focus on micro level phenomena, tend to use qualitative methods, and undermine assumptions about the universality of social categories by exploring how the lives of women, for example, differ across ethnicity, class and so on. The approach pays careful attention not only to how some groups differ from other groups but also to how all groups are characterized by differences within and amongst themselves. The second approach, in contrast, is best described as comparative in design and focuses on examining the relational nature of multiple social categories at the macro-level. Here Choo and Ferree's "process-centred" approach (2010) and McCall's "inter-categorical" approach (2005) are key examples. Researchers using this approach usually avail themselves of quantitative methods and focus on determining the saliency of a given social category in producing advantages and disadvantages. The third approach understands a variety of social categories as forms of social inequality that are co-created by multiple institutions (e.g., family, education, work) in culturally and historically specific contexts. As demonstrated by Choo and Ferree's "system-centred approach" (2010) and McCall's "anti-categorical" approach (2005), scholarship of this sort tends to be qualitative in nature and is oriented around deconstructing the boundaries of the very categories in question by mapping social processes of category production.

The summary provided above is useful insofar as it offers OH&S scholars a tool for understanding some of the central assumptions and methodological directions that characterize intersectional approaches. That said, there are other ways of "doing" intersectionality. Cho et al. (2013) make clear that "what makes an analysis intersectional is not its use of the term 'intersectionality,' nor its being situated in a familiar genealogy, nor its drawing on lists of standard citations. Rather, what makes an analysis intersectional... is its adoption of an intersectional way of thinking about the problem of sameness and difference and its relation to power" (quoted in Collins, 2015 p. 11). Indeed, none of the articles reviewed in this paper make explicit mention of intersectionality.

6.2. Study characteristics

We identified nine articles that apply the intersectional approach. This approach was sometimes used in combination with other theoretical perspectives. The articles aim to understand risk in OH&S contexts by examining the intersection of masculinity and class, ethnicity, immigration status, and/or disability. In general, they point to the ways in which capital-labour relations produce masculinized and, in some cases, racialized or immigrant working-class cultures and identities as well as work-related injury or disability.

All of the articles take a qualitative approach. The range of qualitative methods include ethnography (De Genova, 2006), inter-

views (Dolan, 2011; Forestell, 2006; Ibanez and Narocki, 2011; Johnston and McIvor, 2004), participant observation (Ramirez, 2011; Walter et al., 2004), and textual analysis or qualitative content analysis (Johnston and McIvor, 2004; Wicks, 2002; Turtiainen and Väänänen, 2012). Some of the articles use multiple qualitative methods (Forestell, 2006; Walter et al., 2004) as well as historical (e.g., Forestell, 2006; Johnston and McIvor, 2004; Turtiainen and Väänänen, 2012) and/or retrospective (Wicks, 2002) approaches. Taking a more geographical approach, Dolan (2011) uses a comparative qualitative research design and, in doing so, interviews men in two different areas.

The articles focus on a wide variety of geographical and occupational contexts including: coal and gold miners in Canada (Wicks, 2002; Forestell, 2006); coal miners, iron and steel workers and shipbuilders in Scotland (Johnston and McIvor, 2004); construction workers in Spain (Ibanez and Narocki, 2011); metal workers in post-war Finland (Turtiainen and Väänänen, 2012); Mexican immigrant gardeners in the US (Ramirez, 2011); Mexican migrant truck cleaners in the US (De Genova, 2006); skilled manufacturing workers and unskilled labourers in the UK (Dolan, 2011); and undocumented Latino labourers in the US (Walter et al., 2004). Overall, the articles investigate the relationship between masculinity, OH&S and risk by observing the working lives of men as well as by talking directly to them or collecting their stories. Only one article (Ibanez and Narocki, 2011) includes interviews with women.

6.3. Benefits

In general, the articles can be seen to adhere to Choo and Ferree's (2010) "system-centred" approach and McCall's (2005) "anti-categorical" approach. Rather than view men's risk-taking behaviour as natural, the articles ask how we might make sense of it by looking at the larger social and economic conditions over which workers have little to no control. More specifically, the articles examine how OH&S is impacted by men's gendered identities and cultures as well as by their class locations (e.g., De Genova, 2006; Dolan, 2011; Ibanez and Narocki, 2011; Johnston and McIvor, 2004; Turtiainen and Väänänen, 2012; Wicks, 2002). In some cases, the relationship between gender, class and OH&S is characterized as co-constitutive, which is to say that risky workplace practices are understood as a product of both cultural expressions of masculinity and economic vulnerability. Dolan (2011), for example, argues that competitive labour markets and weak labour protections encourage unskilled and low skilled men to engage in risk-taking and unsafe workplace practices in order to demonstrate that they have the work ethic and physical toughness to do the job. He explains that their resistance to safety protocols or to seeking medical attention is at once an adherence to norms of masculinity and a demonstration of workers' willingness to prioritize the company's productivity, thereby minimizing their risk of job loss.

In other cases, gendered work identities and cultures are understood as a product of highly competitive labour markets and harsh working conditions. For example, Ibanez and Narocki (2011) challenge the claim that the high rates of accident and injury in the Spanish construction industry are caused by a masculine work culture. Instead, drawing on Paap (2006), they argue that the structural conditions of the industry (e.g., subcontracting, lack of recognition of formal training, precariousness of work) give men little choice but to push their bodies and take risks (e.g., carrying heavy loads). The risk-taking, in particular, protects men by both proving they are good workers and excluding women who might wish to enter the industry. In these ways, men's OH&S practices should not be reduced to men's so-called "nature" but should, instead, be seen as shaped by structural economic relations as well as social and cultural meanings of gender.

Other articles complicate the analysis further by considering how gender, class, immigration status and race intersect to produce OH&S risks and outcomes. Migrant workers are especially vulnerable as the legal conditions of their work are often ambiguous. In this context, losing a job often means losing income and being deported. The Mexican migrant workers in De Genova's study (2006) responded to their labour market vulnerability by engaging in unsafe workplace practices (e.g., handling hazardous chemicals without wearing protective equipment). These practices, according to De Genova, serve to create a collective masculine identity based on toughness and to distinguish their skills from other groups of men competing for the same work. In fact, in an attempt to demonstrate to their employer that they are the best men for the job, the Mexican migrants De Genova interviewed often disparaged the work-related abilities of other racialized men. Ramirez's study (2011) of Mexican immigrant gardeners in the US makes a similar argument. Ramirez describes gardening work as "dirty work" (p. 105) that involves hard manual labour and exposure to work-related hazards. Despite the dirty nature of the work, however, Ramirez's study participants did not tend to wear protective equipment. Ramirez explains that these risk-taking practices reflect the performance of a culturally-specific working-class masculinity and demonstrate a physical ability to do the job well. At the same time, the workers must manage overt displays of toughness; that is, they must negotiate an employment relationship in which they appear to be compliant workers in the eyes of the men and women who employ them. This negotiation on the part of the workers is aimed at keeping their jobs in a context of insecure employment arrangements.

Intersectional approaches to OH&S explore how social institutions such as the family and the workplace construct gender, class and ethnicity in inequitable and unjust ways. For example, in Ramirez's study (2011), the Mexican migrant gardeners' masculine identities are achieved through risk-taking and physical toughness on the job as well as through their breadwinning roles as migrant workers. The contradiction is, of course, that engaging in risky work practices has the potential to end one's ability to be a migrant breadwinner through injury, illness and/or deportation (for those with ambiguous or illegal immigration statuses) (Walter et al., 2004). Focusing on the intersection of family and work in a different context, Forestell (2006) describes how a mining community maintained men's positions as family patriarchs after they experienced some form of work-related disability. Labour representatives and the wives of miners argued that, in the case of a minor disability, injured workers should be allowed to go back to work while, in the case of a more serious disability, they should be reassigned to another job within the mine or compensated financially. These measures allowed men to maintain their positions as heads of household, yet also served to increase women's unpaid domestic and care-related responsibilities.

Intersectionality is not oriented around examining particular workplace practices in an ergonomic sense; that is, determining direct health and safety outcomes or comparing men and women's rates of injury or fatality. Instead, the strength of intersectional approaches lies in their ability to draw on various theories of inequality and, in doing so, to connect men's lived experiences of the workplace to structural economic and social arrangements.

6.4. Challenges

An intersectional approach seeks to make sense of OH&S-related risks within the context of a broader set of intersecting social relations. In doing so, it pays particular attention to the ways in which workers' behaviours, identities and work cultures are structurally created and constrained. A challenge for researchers conducting intersectional analysis is to avoid taking an "additive"

approach, which assumes that social categories (e.g., class, gender, ethnicity) act independently (Choo and Ferree, 2010, p. 131). Instead, intersectional scholars attempt to understand how categories intersect or interact with each other in order to create and sustain particular outcomes. For example, gender shapes one's opportunities for and experiences of work; however, the particulars of those gendered experiences of work vary among differently racialized bodies and so on. This is a methodological issue as much as it is a theoretical one. The articles reviewed here did not include a discussion of intersectionality as either a theoretical or a methodological approach. Thus readers who are not familiar with intersectionality may not easily place the theoretical framing within this wider body of literature. In addition, while all articles in this review used qualitative methods, intersectionality is not limited to qualitative analysis. McCall (2005) argues that quantitative and qualitative methods contribute differently to intersectional analysis, with quantitative approaches measuring the degree of influence of various social categories on an outcomes and qualitative approaches investigating how and why such outcomes are produced. We suggest that both approaches may be needed to more fully understand the relationship between gender and OH&S.

7. Recommendations

7.1. Recommendations for future research and application of theoretical approaches

In this review, theories and approaches were chosen based on the frequency of their use in the OH&S and high-risk occupations literature. The approaches discussed, however, do not represent an exhaustive list of all possible theoretical approaches to the study of gender in the context of OH&S. We call on researchers in the field of OH&S to further explore how other theoretical perspectives, such as materialist or phenomenological perspectives, might improve our understanding of the complexity of men's gendered identities and experiences in the context of work-related risk. While not the specific focus of this paper, we also suggest that further exploration of women's experiences of occupational risks may extend conceptualizations of risk across occupational categories.

Our review also leads us to make three general recommendations to those who wish to apply a theoretical perspective to the study of gender and OH&S. First, we suggest that scholars use a more theoretically reflexive approach; that is, an approach that is more explicit about both naming and describing the applied perspective. Second, we suggest that authors be more specific about exactly how they went about applying the perspective; this may include a description of how theory informed the development of the study, the collection and analysis of data and the final presentation of findings. And third, we suggest that scholars be mindful of both the advantages and the disadvantages of applying a particular theoretical perspective to a particular set of research questions. To provide a guide for researchers interested in applying contemporary theory to the study of gender and OH&S, we expand on this third recommendation by reflecting on examples from the four groups of articles discussed in this paper and providing examples of the types of research questions each approach may be best suited to address.

7.2. Gender differences approach

A gender differences approach allows us to examine different OH&S outcomes for men and women. More specifically, this type of approach is well suited to answer questions such as: Do men and women experience job strain in a specific occupation similarly

or differently? What is the relationship between gender and reported workplace injuries among workers within a specific occupation? And are there gender differences in the use of health and rehabilitation services among workers who have lodged a workers' compensation claim? That said, researchers who use a gender differences approach may wish to keep a number of important issues in mind. First, more consideration needs to be given to how to control for potentially confounding work-related factors (e.g. occupation, work tasks, work conditions) in order to be able to compare "apples" to "apples". This may necessitate comparing men and women who are working in the same job, job level, workplace and/or who are subjected to the same work conditions (Messing et al., 2003; Laaksonen et al., 2010). Second, more attention needs to be paid to identifying how gender differences may interact with other variables since gender may only account for some of why OH&S outcomes differ among men and women. These variables include a worker's job requirements (Harrell, 1986; Laaksonen et al., 2010; Messing et al., 1994), age and work experience (Taiwo et al., 2009), decisional latitude and control over his or her work schedule, tasks, hours and un-paid tasks completed outside the workplace (Leijon et al., 2005; Peterson, 2004; Messing et al., 2009; Wirtz et al., 2012). Third, more studies need to address the experiential aspects of work, in general, and examine more specifically how gender roles and relations, can influence men's and women's work experiences. Lastly, while some authors have begun to examine issues related to gender roles and relations (see Iwasaki et al., 2004 as an example) their conclusions have not always been buttressed by evidentiary support and, as a result, have sometimes been characterized by stereotypical thinking about men and women.

7.3. Hegemonic masculinity theory

Our review suggests that hegemonic masculinity theory is at its most useful when it is applied to the study of gendered workplace cultures. Viewed through the lens of HMT, these cultures appear to encourage a highly specific type of masculinity; that is, one that is socially ascendant, collectively celebrated, hierarchically organized and characterized by risk-taking, stoicism, toughness and a repudiation of the feminine. HMT should, therefore, be retained as it is helpful in exploring the following kinds of questions: How do the work-related practices associated with hegemonic masculinity (e.g., horseplay, one-up-manship, risk-taking, etc.) interfere with the successful implementation of OH&S policies and procedures in high risk male-dominated sectors? How do the gender-related practices associated with hegemonic masculinity (e.g., repudiation of the feminine, homophobia, etc.) create a "chilly climate" for women and gay men in high risk male-dominated sectors, thereby curtailing the OH&S of these two groups? And, perhaps most interestingly, do women engage in practices of hegemonic masculinity in high risk male-dominated workplaces and, if so, how do these practices both converge with and diverge from those of men? That said, we also argue that HMT should be paired with other perspectives, as it tends to reduce men to one-dimensional beings characterized by negative personality traits and an obsession with dominating those around them. We need, in other words, to be mindful of the fact that—when used in isolation—HMT tends to "whittle down the complexity of human subjects" and "exclude those practices, statements and feelings which do not fit within [its] typology" of masculinities (Moller, 2007, p. 268). As suggested earlier, HMT is worth retaining but only if more attention is directed at thinking about all four masculinity types outlined by Connell (1987, 1995) and only if it is supplemented by a range of other theories that broaden its conceptual horizons.

7.4. Embodiment theories

Theories of embodiment are useful insofar as they allow us to more fully appreciate the ways in which broader social structures impact a man's values and beliefs while, at the same time, constituting his actions and inactions within workplace contexts. By offering a lens through which to see decision-making as a subconscious process, embodiment theories can enhance our understanding of a male worker's perception of risk as well as his reluctance to participate in what might appear to be perfectly reasonable safety practices. Indeed, embodiment theory provides exciting opportunities to explore the complex and often fluid ways that gender is accomplished, enacted and negotiated within workplace contexts. Embodiment theory is, therefore, well suited to answer questions such as: What are the processes through which men become acclimated to the dangers of their professions? How does a workplace's culture become embedded in the bodies of workers and how does this embeddedness inform their risk-related behaviours? Why do men sometimes display resistance to workplace safety policies? How do we facilitate a change in safety procedures and safe practices that is in tune with the embodied practices of a particular workplace? And, finally, why do some men seek out high-risk occupations when safer ways of earning a living are available? Because embodiment theories track the ways in which society is embedded in the bodies of individuals over time and across space, researchers might struggle with the problem of having too many fields from which to choose. In this way, researchers need to decide which social fields are most relevant to their research questions and be transparent about their research steps and decision-making processes.

7.5. Intersectional approaches

Our review suggests that intersectional approaches may be best suited to research that examines OH&S in relation to broader structural and cultural contexts. More specifically, intersectional approaches shed light on the ways in which gender, class, immigration status, race/ethnicity and other social locations intersect to produce specific OH&S risks and outcomes for particular groups of workers in particular sectors or industries. As outlined earlier, qualitative intersectional approaches clarify the ways in which the structure of the broader economy—and the conditions of a given sector or industry—create and sustain gendered identities and work-based cultures that encourage or discourage risk-taking behaviours. What is more, intersectional approaches demonstrate that gender may or may not be the primary driver of unsafe work practices. Indeed, the articles reviewed here suggest that economic conditions (e.g., competitive labour market, precariousness of work) may play a more determining role in the health and safety of men in high risk work environments. Quantitative intersectional approaches are particularly useful for identifying the salience and influence of social categories on OH&S outcomes. Qualitative intersectional analysis is well-suited to answer questions such as: How do economic conditions or labour market conditions shape how men do their jobs? How do the characteristics of specific industries/sectors shape how men work safely or not? How do men's roles in the family contribute to their work practices? How do regulatory and policy contexts shape men's work practices? A challenge for researchers conducting intersectional analysis is to avoid taking an “additive” approach. Choo and Ferree (2010, p.131) suggest, for instance, that intersectionality should focus on “moving beyond the enumeration and addition of race, class, gender, and other types of social subordination as separate factors.” Intersectionality seeks to uncover how, for example, class and gender intersect to produce new or unique forms of inequali-

ties, identities and practices and should be applied with this nuanced objective in mind.

8. Conclusion

This paper confirms and extends an emerging body of scholarship on gender, theory and OH&S (see Jensen et al., 2014). In order to improve men's OH&S we conclude that it is important to understand: (1) the specific hazards to which men are exposed in high risk work situations; (2) the elements that acclimatize them to risk in occupational contexts; and (3) how broader contextual and structural elements influence men's OH&S. We review and analyze how varied theoretical approaches have been applied to understanding the complex puzzle of men's OH&S and argue that the application of theory—despite the challenges sometimes involved—is useful for developing a more complex understanding of gender and how it interacts with other elements to influence men's OH&S. Our review also reminds us that we need to be careful about how we analyze gender, as binary categorizations of men's and women's experiences of occupational safety and risk do not always apply across the board. Similarly, the factors that influence risk-taking behaviours do not always begin and end with gender and the performance thereof. The results of our review can, therefore, be seen to have important implications for safety practice as the existing body of research on OH&S ultimately informs safety program development.

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