

## BUT WHO CRAFTED THE CRAFTSPEOPLE?

Examining craft policy on three Atlantic Canadian islands

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### Abstract

Drawing upon the work of Pierre Bourdieu, this paper sets out to examine the connection between craft policy and the construction of the island craftsperson. This involves examining the craft policies of three Atlantic Canadian islands: Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island and Cape Breton. These policies were all released in the early 2000s with desires to promote their respective islands to tourists. Through this examination, it is evident that the notion of the craftsperson is not self-determined, is not tied to class of origin, and is not presented as being connected to the culture of the particular island. The official construction of the craftsperson is one that is market-driven and determined by perceived tourists' desires.

### Keywords

Cape Breton, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland, craftspeople, identity, cultural production

### Introduction

It is a perpetual adage that islands are quaint, pastoral, almost frozen-in-time. They are the last bastions against the effects of industrialisation, modernisation, and maybe even postmodernism. As island scholars know, however, these ideas are simplistic and ignore how islands can actually be the nexus where many globalising forces come to bear. Influences from the outside are continuously penetrating island life. Not only do influences come to shape obvious political, economic and, to a certain degree, social elements of islanders' lives, but when one looks closely, it is possible that even the most "traditional" activities, such as crafts, become not just markers of an island's cultural aesthetic linked to place, but become shaped by those who are not from the island.

This paper's title owes its crafting to Pierre Bourdieu's 'But who creates the 'creator?'' (2002). In his essay, Bourdieu suggests sociologists can contribute to the theorising of art and artists by not only discussing art consumption (as done by Cultural Studies) but also interrogate art production. Through his concepts of *habitus*, field and post, Bourdieu sets out to demonstrate that the 'artist' is not only defined by individual genius but also by the social conditions within which he/she lives. What is intriguing in this chapter is the almost off-the-cuff mention of craft Bourdieu makes. Of particular note is the following remark, "the producer's *habitus* is never entirely the product of his [sic] post – except perhaps in some craft traditions where family training (and therefore the

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conditioning of the class origin) and professional training are completely merged with one another” (2002: 99). I want to take this quote as my launch point for this paper. My intention is to see if craft production is constrained by class origin, as Bourdieu suggests, or is it more nuanced by the market and the field of consumption.

Crafts, as cultural practice, are coming to the forefront of late, as the Do-It-Yourself movement is gaining prominence (Gauntlett, 2011). Dormer (1997: 7) points out that those who study crafts tend to have definitions that fall within two broad categories that are “unavoidably sloppy”. The first falls under the rubric of studio crafts. For Fariello (2011) this means looking for the mark of the hand, the education of the hand, a community in action, function as meaning and material spirit. Dormer’s second category is that craft is a process. Here Adamson articulates the idea of crafts “as an approach, an attitude, or a habit of action” (2007: 4). It should also be added, as Adamson indicates, that crafts practice may be understood as something it is not – art. It is a liminal concept that is juxtaposed against definitions of what is considered art. This notion of classification is important to Bourdieu. In order to interrogate Bourdieu’s argument, I am looking at how three North Atlantic Canadian islands – Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island (PEI), and Cape Breton – have developed policy to define the trajectory of their respective craft industries. These islands will aid in understanding what little power craftspeople, particularly in marginal areas, have in defining themselves. Furthermore, I will show that what seems like work that has long been connected to place loses that connection when it is (as Bourdieu characterises) primarily produced for a bourgeois audience.

### Context

The three islands under investigation, Newfoundland, PEI and Cape Breton are all located along Canada’s eastern shore.

*Newfoundland* is part of Newfoundland and Labrador, the newest province to join Canada’s Confederation (in 1949). The main island of Newfoundland (the focus of this article) had a population of c465,000 as of 2011. It is a place that has very much been shaped by the sea, where cod fishing long sustained the many isolated outports around the bays. The North Atlantic Cod Moratorium of 1996 profoundly changed Newfoundland. In particular, it marked the start of an outmigration trend that is continuing today. Culturally, Newfoundland is known for its traditional folk music (heavily influenced by Irish music), brightly painted houses and food such as jig’s dinner (salt beef, root vegetables, peas pudding), fisherman’s brewis (salt cod, potato, hard bread), and toutons (deep fried bread dough). When it comes to Newfoundland’s material culture, knitting, mat hooking and some woodworking have long been established as representative of a Newfoundland way of life. As Shirley Scott (1990) noted, Newfoundland is Canada’s folk knitting capital. Over the years, Newfoundland governments have used traditional crafts as ways of marketing the place. Overton (1996) notes that since the late 1800s, Newfoundland governments have pushed to accentuate ‘Newfoundlandness’ through typical food, dialect and crafts. It has long been the part of governments’ development plans to sell Newfoundland to tourists through these initiatives.

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Figure One: Map of Canada's Atlantic Provinces and Newfoundland

*Prince Edward Island* is the smallest of Canada's provinces with a population of c 146,000 in 2011. In 1997 the Confederation Bridge was opened as the permanent link between PEI and the mainland. The primary industries on PEI are fishing (especially lobster), potato farming and tourism. The Island, as residents affectionately refer to it, is known for the rolling green hills, red dirt and splendid white beaches. PEI is dominated by a Scottish-Presbyterian heritage. Rubio states that this invokes principles with:

*emphasis on empowerment of all classes of people through education, on participatory democracy in church and civic government, on constant self-examination through one's reasoning facilities, on 'plain speaking' and accessibility in rhetorical styles and public discourse, on valuing intellectuality and achievement... [valuing] both the oral tradition and the written word. (1999: 89)*

This heritage becomes represented by, and synonymous with, L.M Montgomery's fictional character Anne of Green Gables. With musicals, a national park, dolls and other approved merchandise, when visiting PEI you cannot escape from the images of Anne.<sup>1</sup> As Island comedian Patrick Ledwell points out, when talking about PEI, it is either Anne or the potato, and Anne will always win (2012).

*Cape Breton*. Unlike the other two islands, Cape Breton, with population of c136,000 in 2011, is not a province unto itself but is a part of Nova Scotia. In 1955, the Canso Causeway opened, providing a permanent link between Cape Breton and the mainland.

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Over the last few years, many tourist magazines, such as *Travel + Leisure World*, have named Cape Breton as a prime tourist destination. Historically, Cape Breton's culture has been shaped by Gaelic-speaking Scottish Roman Catholic settlers. Today, it is one of the very few places in North America where the Gaelic language is actively promoted. In the 1990s Cape Breton was brought to the spotlight by many of the musicians that were part of the Celtic wave going on at the time. Ashley MacIsaac, Natalie MacMaster, the Rankin Family, the Barra MacNeils, and even earlier musicians, such as Rita MacNeil, all promoted the Cape Breton culture. This was a culture many viewed as one to be mined as the authentic Scottish culture lost to contemporary Scotland. People like Buddy MacMaster went to Scotland to teach Scots fiddling and step-dancing repertoire that was no longer practiced there.

### The Craft Reports

This paper will look at the craft reports drafted in the first decade of this century. The first report is actually a series of short reports on PEI's craft industry prepared by private consultants, Morley E. Pinsent (of Rural Resource Consultants) and Gerald F. Gabriel (of Community Development Associates) in 2001. It was prepared for the Prince Edward Island Craft Council. These reports summarise findings from surveys conducted the previous year with the Handcrafts Producers and the Handcrafts Retailers. According to the reports, in 2000 there were 540 handcraft producers in PEI with Canadian \$19.6 million in total retail value for their products.<sup>2</sup> The second report to be considered is 'Newfoundland and Labrador Craft Industry Development Strategy: Summary and recommendations' (2002). AMEC Earth and Environmental Limited and Hollet and Sons prepared this for the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. The report states that in 2000, there were 200 companies and 2000 individuals in the province's craft industry. They report that the industry had an estimated worth of \$38 million. The final report was released in 2003 under the title 'Framework for progress – Go forward strategy, Cape Breton craft sector'. Again, private consultants were the authors: Dan White and Associates Limited in association with Market Assess International Inc. and Economic Growth Solutions. This was prepared for the Cape Breton Centre for Craft and Design. This report states that there are approximately 800 active participants in the local craft industry, which brings in about \$7 million in sales. One thing to note about the reports is that in all cases private companies were commissioned to prepare these documents. This may carry some bias in supporting the commissioners' argument. Furthermore, only in the case of Newfoundland was the report directly connected to a government agency. In the case of PEI and Cape Breton the reports were done for agencies that received government support but were not part of the government policy-making departments. This means that one must be cognisant that in the construction of the reports there may be possible lobbying language to argue for financial support from the government.

### Crafts as a field of Cultural Production

What I wish to do now is to situate the notion of crafts on islands within Pierre Bourdieu's social theory. In particular, this paper will situate itself within Bourdieu's understanding of artistic fields and cultural production. This involves looking at concepts such as *habitus* and field. Bourdieu describes *habitus* as, "an acquired system of generative schemes objectively adjusted to the particular conditions in which it is

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constituted” (1977: 95). They are the tastes, skills and dispositions that are unconsciously part of our everyday life. One embodies them without being aware of the *habitus* that is on display. In the earlier quote from the introduction, Bourdieu points out that in the case of craftspeople, the idea of the *habitus* may be one that is quite strong, as not only are the family dispositions taken on, but the professional training, which is very much rooted in the place, reinforces these dispositions. Fields are the social arenas where “struggles or manoeuvres take place over specific resources or stakes and access to them” (Jenkins, 2002: 84). The notion of struggle implies, therefore, that issues around power are paramount. Who has the power to make the decisions about who is included in the decision-making and who does not? Bourdieu comes to identify four types of resources that people use to gain power: economic capital, cultural capital, social capital and symbolic capital.

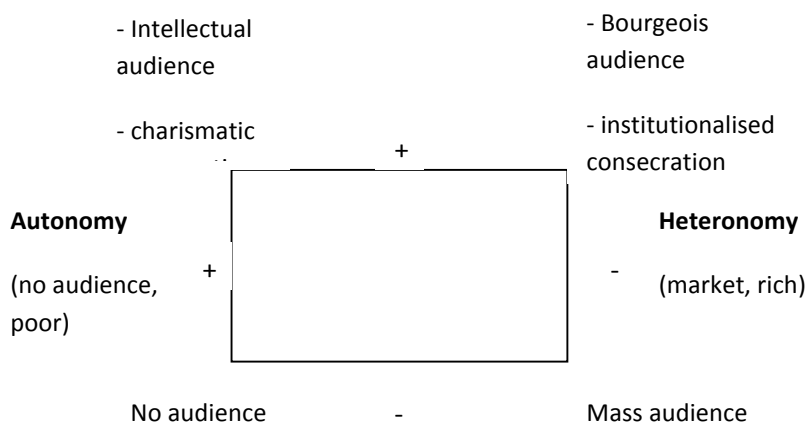


Figure 2: Representation of Bourdieu’s model of the Artistic Field

(“+” means positive pole whereby it is a dominant position; “-“ means negative pole whereby it is a dominated position)

Bourdieu’s artistic field is similar to that of Howard Becker’s art worlds, “the network of people whose co-operative activity, organised via their joint knowledge of conventional means of doing things, produces the kind of art works that the art world is noted for” (1982: 34-35). What distinguishes the two is that “the artistic field is not reducible to a *population*” (Bourdieu, 1993: 35 - italics in original). The artistic field places more emphasis on power relations, struggles and the social construction of ideas (Alexander, 2003). The artistic field is divided into different poles. These are devised based on class relations and ideologies. The first pole is the autonomous pole where artists are mostly left on their own. It is “art for art’s sake” where there is a pure gaze (a break between aesthetics and morality) and a disinterest in the economic worth of art. Prestige comes not from economic capital but from recognition among the field members. In fact, if one is a commercial failure, it is a ‘badge of honour’ (Alexander, 2003). There is an avoidance of outside interests. The second pole is heteronomous, whereby the art produced is for the marketplace. As such it is open to the influence of other fields. The

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art here is judged by how well it sells. Within it we find “bourgeois art,” that has some pretension of artiness, and “industrial art,” that unabashedly panders to commercial companies of mass tastes (Alexander, 2003).

What we see here are levels of struggles that come to define the field: autonomy, recognition, economic capital, and symbolic capital. At the heart of the struggles is the definition of who is an artist, or more generally, a creator: “the field of cultural production is the site of struggles in which what is at stake is the power to impose the dominant definition of the writer [ie cultural producer] and to therefore delimit the population of those entitled to take part in the struggle to define the writer [cultural producer]” (Bourdieu, 1993: 42). It is here where the field of power comes into play. For Bourdieu the field of power is the political field that subsumes all other fields. It is here where different elites compete with one another for assets and for hegemony over subordinate classes. “The most disputed frontier of all is the one which separates the field of cultural production and the field of power” (ibid: 43). It comes down to who gets to be the one granted the right to say they create culture – those as self-identified members or the elite? As Richard Jenkins points out, Bourdieu sees that “classification is at the heart of social order and organisation” (2002: xi). Classification is needed in order for there to be a transformation from the practical group, in itself, and the instituted group, for itself. This allows group identity to be formed and constituted. Classification can only have its results because the ‘classifiers’ have the power to designate – define – what the field is and who belongs. There is the struggle, then, between those who want recognition and those who can give it.

Returning to the idea of crafts then, how do they fit into Bourdieu’s theory? One problematic element of Bourdieu’s theory of the field of cultural production is that cultural production is often equated with “art.” He fluidly shifts between the idea of the “artistic field” and the “field of cultural production” as being pseudonymous with each other. When he himself attempts to define the field of cultural production, this is what he states:

*The artistic field is a universe of beliefs. Cultural production distinguishes itself from the production of the most common objects in that it must produce not only the object in its materiality, but also the value of this object, that is, the recognition of artistic legitimacy. This is inseparable from the production of the artist or the writer as artist or the writer, in other words, as a creator of value. (1993: 164 - emphasis in original)*

With the often perceived marginality of crafts from art, is it useful, or even possible, to include crafts in the field of cultural production?

While the debates have quieted about whether crafts are as ‘worthy’ of study as art, it is important to highlight that crafts do operate to produce culture. As Glenn Adamson points out, crafts have “a constituency and economic basis, and hence a social presence” (2007:3). Through their materiality, they come to represent values and norms of a particular culture at a particular time, space, and *place*. As Staub points out, crafts embody patterns of cultural experiences, whereby we see “the transmission of knowledge and skill, the interactions of craftworkers among themselves and with community members, the transformation of raw materials and the adaptive use of available resources, patterns of continuity and change in craft traditions, and the relationship between physical objects and community values, beliefs, experience and

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identity” (1988: 30-31). This is a broader social understanding than one of the more typical definitions of crafts as “a body of knowledge and skill which can be used to produce useful objects... [with the] ability to perform in a useful way” (Becker, 1982: 273).

Norbert Elias (1993) provides a discussion on the distinction between *craftsmen's* [sic] *art* and *artists' art*. He argues that what comes to distinguish these two is the balance of power. In the former the patron has the preponderance of the power, whereby the latter sees power more firmly in hands of the artist. He articulates this as follows:

*In the phase of craftsmen's [sic] art the patrons' canon of taste as a framework for artistic creation had preponderance over the personal fantasy of every artist. Individual imagination was channelled strictly according to the taste of the established patron class. In the phase of artists' art those creating art are in general socially equal to the public which enjoys and buys art.* (133).

He continues to argue that once an artist breaks free of the patrons' canon, they can express themselves in a more individualised manner. Elias states that this is not only the case in Europe but can be seen in other 'folk' examples, such as African tribal art. As the tribe, the patrons, become more integrated into the larger (globalised?) society, they change to being a collection of individuals in a state unit. “Here too craft production... slowly frees itself from dependence on a particular buyer or a particular occasion within a village, and changes into production for a market of anonymous people, such as the tourist market or the international art market mediated by dealers” (133). This becomes problematic in that Elias assumes that moving into a larger market means a higher degree of autonomy. As I have articulated elsewhere (Harling Stalker, 2006), when craftworkers put their 'art' on the market, local or tourist, we see that they are actually proletarianised, a “process [that] involves the producer retaining the direct means of ownership of his or her production, while the economic and property ownership is co-opted by capital” (ibid: 17). This is comparable with what happens in other occupations, such as fishing (Clement, 1986).

What, then, about crafts on islands and islands' field of cultural productions? First, crafts have been linked with islands at least metaphorically. There is a quote from Adamson that illustrates this kind of connection: “‘The crafts,’ by contrast [to modern art], are a well-defined terrain, an archipelago of discrete islands with fixed boundaries” (2007: 6). This echoes Stratford et al's (2011) call for an understanding of islands in relation to other islands. Crafts are not just one thing but a variety of processes and mediums that are related. Secondly, both islands and crafts share the perceived characteristic of being pastoral or sheltered from modernity (see Knudsen and Greer, 2011, for islands; Adamson, 2007, for crafts). This notion of the preservation and representation of a glorified past is something with which islands and crafts, as being peripheral from power (islands to mainlands, crafts to arts), must contend. Through Bourdieu questions about who *defines* craft and craftspeople are brought to light. There seems to be an understanding that it is the 'craft community', but as Bourdieu points out, it is the elites in the field of power, the political, who come to have the power of classification. This is where we turn to our three craft reports to see how this classification is happening.

## Methodology

When I analyse documents, I take my cue from Jennifer Mason (2002) and John Scott (1990). Mason argues that when doing qualitative research, we need to read our data in three ways: literally, interpretively and reflexively. The literal reading has us asking “what is there?” It is looking at things such as “literal form, content, structure, style, layout, and so on” (2002: 149). We, however, cannot stop there. The next level of analysis means being interpretive. In an interpretive reading, Mason suggests we read through or beyond the data. We look at how the document is constructed within a particular discourse that allows us to explain what is happening. The last level of analysis is to read the document with a view to be reflexive. As Mason articulates, “A reflexive reading will locate you as part of the data you have generated, and will seek to explore your role and perspective in the process of generation and interpretation of data” (149). As all reflexive actions, it is recognition that the researcher has a relationship with the data at all phases – collecting and interpreting – that comes into play in the analysis of the document.

Scott (1990) provides guidance on how to approach the documents in question. This includes questions around authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning. These all seem quite self-explanatory, but nonetheless should be unpacked. The first requirement is to ascertain if a document is genuine, that is, is it authentic? Are there glaring errors to be noted, passed through many hands, inconsistent, etc? Even if we find that the document is not authentic, what does that tell us? From here we move on to deal with credibility. Credibility “refers to the extent to which the evidence is undistorted and sincere, free from error and evasion” (ibid: 7). Here we start to establish the socio-political context in which the document is created to understand the author’s framework within which he/she is working. Questions around representativeness follow up on this. Is the document typical of others on the same subject? Lastly, we have the document’s meanings. The seemingly simple questions of “what is it, and what does it tell us?” (ibid: 8) need to be asked. While these questions seem simple, they are in fact quite complex. The issue to remember is that meanings can, and do, change over time. It is therefore important at this stage to remember the social context within which the document was written to help us understand what it is trying to convey.

## Analysis

*Cape Breton*. This report starts by articulating the importance of crafts: “Crafts are testimony to the need and capacity that human beings have to create... But creativity does not occur in a vacuum” (1). The argument put forth is that crafts are to be “a dynamic and innovative craft sector recognised for excellence and viewed as a vital part of the social, economic and cultural fabric, enhancing Cape Breton’s and Nova Scotia’s well-being” (2). This is a lofty declaration and sets up that we are presented with an explicit understanding of the craftsperson. With the articulation that crafts are a “vital part” of Cape Breton culture, it could be expected that there is a strong sense of the craftsperson as a Cape Bretonner contributing to the cultural fabric of the island.

The report presents four goals that need to be achieved to ensure this vital contribution, the “framework for progress” (3):



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1. Enterprise development: business skills of the “**commercial craft producer**” strengthened
2. Export sales: expanding the number of **producers**, exploiting markets, balance between retail and export
3. Centres of excellence: “focussed on authentic products that accentuate strong images and distinctive traditions of Cape Breton culture as well as respond to market demand”
4. Professional development: “Enhance design skills among Cape Breton **artisans** and **craftspersons** appropriate to the development of product that is reflective of the area’s heritage and cultural influences, appropriate to market demand, contributes to productivity improvements and to the effective use of resources available to individual **producers** and enterprises.” (emphases added)

In the above articulation of the goals, we see that there is a strong sense of crafts connection to place. They are to reflect place, particularly for its ability to sell to tourists, or extra-locals. How does this come to translate to the understanding of the craftsperson?

In this brief section of the report we see that the craftsperson is given almost two different identities: producer and artisan. The idea of the producer is someone who is making a commodity for the marketplace. In this report, they are to produce commodities with the following in mind (18):

- Designed with the sophisticated, well-educated buyer between the ages of 30-50 in mind;
- That are environmentally friendly;
- Catering to ethnic groups and their traditional holidays;
- Geared to spiritual needs;
- That are educational; and
- That are designed for the home, as more Americans are spending an increasing amount of time at home for comfort and security reasons.

Nowhere in this list of commodities do we see Cape Breton. Products are no longer created with the ‘place’ and its traditions, but with the consumer, and the American one at that, at the forefront. The producer does not have the independence to merely put their wares on the marketplace rather, as Bourdieu would argue, a bourgeois audience needs to be catered to. When that happens, there is a “cultural subordination of other social groups” (Inglis and Hughson, 2003: 181). The producer comes to create a ‘product’ that is institutionally consecrated as desirable and acceptable.

What then about the ‘artisan?’ It seems as though the notion of the artisan is used only in the sense of what someone is before the commodity is made. The artisan in this report is someone that needs training to augment their design abilities and skills in making crafts. It is an abstract identity that is ambiguous and ill-defined. In short order, this identity becomes subsumed by the idea of the producer. There is no attempt to lay out what an artisan is but one can delineate a producer. The producer is something concrete and there is a clear sense of what a producer does. There is no clear understanding about what an artisan does. This may speak to the overall “mystique” of the artist that society likes to preserve; or it could be the image of the folk preserving a way of life that is consumable by the urban visitor. The point here is that the report is

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almost unsure how to articulate what an artisan is, and thereby relegates the idea of being an artisan as subordinate to that of producer. In doing so, the artisans' power to define themselves is negated.

*Prince Edward Island.* For this report, there is a strong desire to comment on a "big event" in the realm of craftwork on Prince Edward Island – the closing of the Centre for Creative Arts. As the report summarises:

*the closing of the Centre for Creative Arts was a retrogressive step. Members of the sector point to the reality that other Maritime provinces have training facilities and thus can readily train new craftspeople. It is their view, that in this basic way, the industry on Prince Edward Island is severely hampered in developing new entrants. But the issues of the school apparently goes [sic] more deeply than just training. Interviewees explained that a handcraft school can be likened to a centre for development. It serves as a resource base that can solve production problems, it can facilitate 'technology and information transfer' in that it maintains awareness of new developments throughout the world, and it can help access the raw materials necessary for quality handcraft design and fabrication. It was emphasised that these are basic concerns of the industry, irrespective of the training issue, that need to be addressed. (12)*

What they seem to be articulating is that the Centre for Creative Arts was where they developed and maintained their identity as a craftsperson. The issue is not merely about being a "producer" but rather that this school allowed them to be an artisan. It provided the skills and social identity that allowed them to define themselves. With the Centre closed, the ability for the craftspeople to say who is a craftsperson is greatly diminished.

This inability to define themselves is evident when reading the report. There is an ambiguity about how to articulate what an Island craftsperson is. At one point in three successive sentences the use of "handcraft producer," "producer," and "artists and artisans" are all used to describe the craftspeople (5). The term "artisan" is used more often in this report than in the Cape Breton one. However, like the Cape Breton report, there is recognition of the necessity of being a producer. At one point in the report the transition from artisan to producer is definitely noted, "there is growing sophistication with individual artisans having seized the opportunity to become significant producer-retailers or producer-wholesalers" (5). Even though there is this recognition of the perceived necessity to be a producer, it seems that this report is trying situate identity as secondary to being an artisan.

The notion that there is something to being a craftsperson beyond being a producer, and the tension this brings, is expressed in the following:

*The reality is that many in the industry net mediocre wages for the amount of work that goes into their hand crafted products. If it were not for the **love of the craft** or the advantage of being able to work at home, the average craftsperson would not be sustaining their involvement and production. (11 - emphasis added)*

As others have noted previously (see Metcalfe, 1997; Mishler, 1999), there is an intrinsic value to being a craftsperson that cannot be calculated by profit. This report is

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reminding the reader that we need to be cognizant that the artisan cannot be seen as merely a producer of crafts, but that there is more to the identity that is intangible.

There is a stronger sense of place in this report as well. There are numerous places where “the Island” is mentioned. Unlike in the other two reports, there seems to be no desire to create an export market for crafts. That does not mean the extra-locals, the tourists in this case, are not important. It is reported that approximately 70%-80% of the crafts are sold to tourists (13). Crafts, as an industry, become intertwined with the Island’s tourist industry. What is unclear for the authors of this report is to what extent crafts play a role in tourism. As they ask, “To what degree does the availability of quality handcrafted products influence the tourism trade to the Island? Or, more precisely, how does the purchase of a quality handcrafted souvenir add to the satisfaction and memorableness of a vacation on the Island?” (13). This points to a realisation that the crafts they make carry meaning, and an identification with place. Islandness, however one might define it, is important to what the artisan does and needs to be recognised as such.

When looking at this report, there is a resistance to accepting *carte blanche* the placement of the Island artisan on Bourdieu’s heteronomy pole. The market is important, but the report establishes a desire to maintain autonomy in defining the artisan. There is a wish to hold on to the ability to say who is a craftsperson. However, at points, there is almost a resignation that the power will be lost to the dominance of others. The loss of the Centre for Creative Arts seems to point to the path that they are trying to oppose.

*Newfoundland.* Unlike the other two reports, this one was released by a provincial government department – the Department of Industry, Trade and Rural Development. With this being the case, and assuming Bourdieu’s understanding of the field of cultural production, we would expect that there is a tight definition of craftspeople. The Government has the authority and the right to administer its population. If one is to administer, it is necessary to have a firm control on the identity of those you govern. The executive summary starts with the following definition:

*The craft industry of Newfoundland and Labrador is defined as a group of individuals and companies involved in the design, production and/or marketing of products which display unique and distinctive characteristics of design, technique and presentation and where the producer maintains direct control over hand tool and machine operations used in the production process. (1)*

It continues, “Inclusion of products within the craft industry may be further defined through the marketplace. For example, craft industry products are primarily sold in craft or gift shops” (ibid). This is a product driven definition. It is easier to define a ‘thing’ than it is to define a creative endeavour. That said, the government definition relies on the marketplace for what is included and craftspeople are the producers of the product.

Another point of interest in this report is that even though there is an explicit idea of the “craft industry” run by “producers,” the use of the concept of the producer is not used throughout the report. The preferred term is “craftsperson/craftspeople” and “professional”. This change in terms leads to a tension that exists between cultural workers and government definitions. As continuously reiterated in the report, the

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Newfoundland craft industry is strongly connected to the tourism industry. Newfoundland has a long history of governments wishing to attract tourists to the island, stemming back to the late 1800s. The image of Newfoundland that they perpetually present is one of the romantic, pastoral and nostalgic. In the mid-20th Century, the then Premier, Joey Smallwood, went so far as to have 'Newfoundland classes' for Newfoundlanders: how to cook Newfoundland food, how to speak with Newfoundland dialect(s) and the like. Therefore, in order for the government to 'sell' crafts to tourists, as defined by the marketplace, not only do they have to market the product but they also have to market the producer to the bourgeois audience. In *Distinctions* (1984), Bourdieu shows that the "folk" is consumable by nearly all classes. The idea of a craftsperson, instead of a producer, brings forth images of the pastoral, romantic and nostalgic. This is the identity that the government, those with power, wish to perpetuate.

The push then is to promote the "pastoralness" of Newfoundland crafts and craftspeople. Purportedly, studios should be open to the public, especially "bus and small party tours" and "retreat weekends with tour operators" (16). This would allow for the urban patron to support the rural artisan. As Hickey states, "Craft is seen as pre-industrial by these consumers – it comes from the past or is old-fashioned and rooted in a place and traditions" (1997: 96). By buying crafts from the studios, as opposed to other retail outlets, she concludes that the consumer attaches greater authenticity and meaning to the craft. That authenticity and meaning comes not only from the craft but also from having purchased from the craftsperson. The craftsperson, in the rural studio "can be cast as a noble savage living in one's backyard" (ibid)<sup>3</sup>; this is the identity that the tourist wishes to consume.

The craftsperson then is someone that is to be the traditional worker. They are the ones that the report charges with maintaining lost skills that should be saved as a piece of Newfoundland culture and heritage. The report recommends that the government and the provincial craft council need to, "Identify traditional skills which have either been lost or are in danger of being lost. Work with Memorial University's Department of Folklore and other appropriate organisations to document these skills and techniques" (9). This recommendation is problematic when looking at it through the lens of identity. The concept of traditional craft skill is to be defined by others with "knowledge," especially the folklore academics. While the academics can be a valuable source, this implies a top-down approach where there is no recognition that the craftspeople may be able to identify the "traditional skills." This is an example of how the craftspeople are denied power to define what they do.

One of the seemingly surprising recommendations in this report is to find someone that is identified with crafts. Under the objective 4.1: develop recognition of and build loyalty to the Newfoundland and Labrador craft industry, the report wishes to develop a strong brand for the craft industry. 'Branding' is concept that has been prominent for the last decade or so. The recommendation reads that the Department of Industry, Trade and Rural Development needs to, "Develop craft icons using both our craftspeople and our products (eg similar to the arts, Chris and Mary Pratt, or media, Rick Mercer, Mary Walsh)" (14). By developing these icons, which seems to be contrary to the romantic/nostalgic idea of the organic craftsperson, it further strengthens the government's ability to define what a craftsperson is. The government will deem what is connected to the identity of the craftsperson through the state-sanctioned icon (see Cormack and Cosgrove, 2012 for how this was done with Rick Mercer). This becomes

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another way in which the state (ie the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador) shapes the identity of the craftsperson.

### Conclusion

This paper set out to use the craft reports from three North Atlantic Canadian islands to explore Bourdieu's theorising of the field of cultural production. The analysis has shown that those making crafts on these islands do not come to define themselves when it comes to strategising about the future of crafts. They are seen as either 'producers' – disembodied economic entities – that must meet the demands of a marketplace, or craftspeople that must perpetuate a romantic ideal to be sold to tourists.

When there is a bourgeois audience to be catered to, the ability to define oneself is diminished. One is put in a situation of being dominated. In Cape Breton, it is the bourgeois audience the authors are turning to in order to define what craftspeople should do. The feeling of powerlessness comes through most clearly in the PEI report, where the loss of the Centre for Creative Arts seems to speak to diminishing power for craftspeople to define who is a craftsperson. In Newfoundland, the government shows the power they have in defining a craftsperson. With a firm definition, the government can decide who is to receive government support and who is not. Those that sell "Newfoundland" on the marketplace will get the support. In theorising the field of production, island crafts help us to clearly see the strength of the bourgeois audience. For these reports, it is not the *place*, with its unique culture, that so much matters but the *marketplace*. The marketplace is governed by the elite bourgeoisie. This means that those who work in the field of cultural production that depend upon the sale of their goods do not have the power to create their own identity.

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### End Notes:

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<sup>1</sup> The image of Anne, all names related to Anne, and any other intellectual property is co-managed by the Province of Prince Edward Island and the Heirs of L. M. Montgomery.

<sup>2</sup> All currency is Canadian dollars.

<sup>3</sup> Here Hickey is referring not to a racial or ethnic designation but one linked to class, rural/urban, and past notions of a worker.

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