

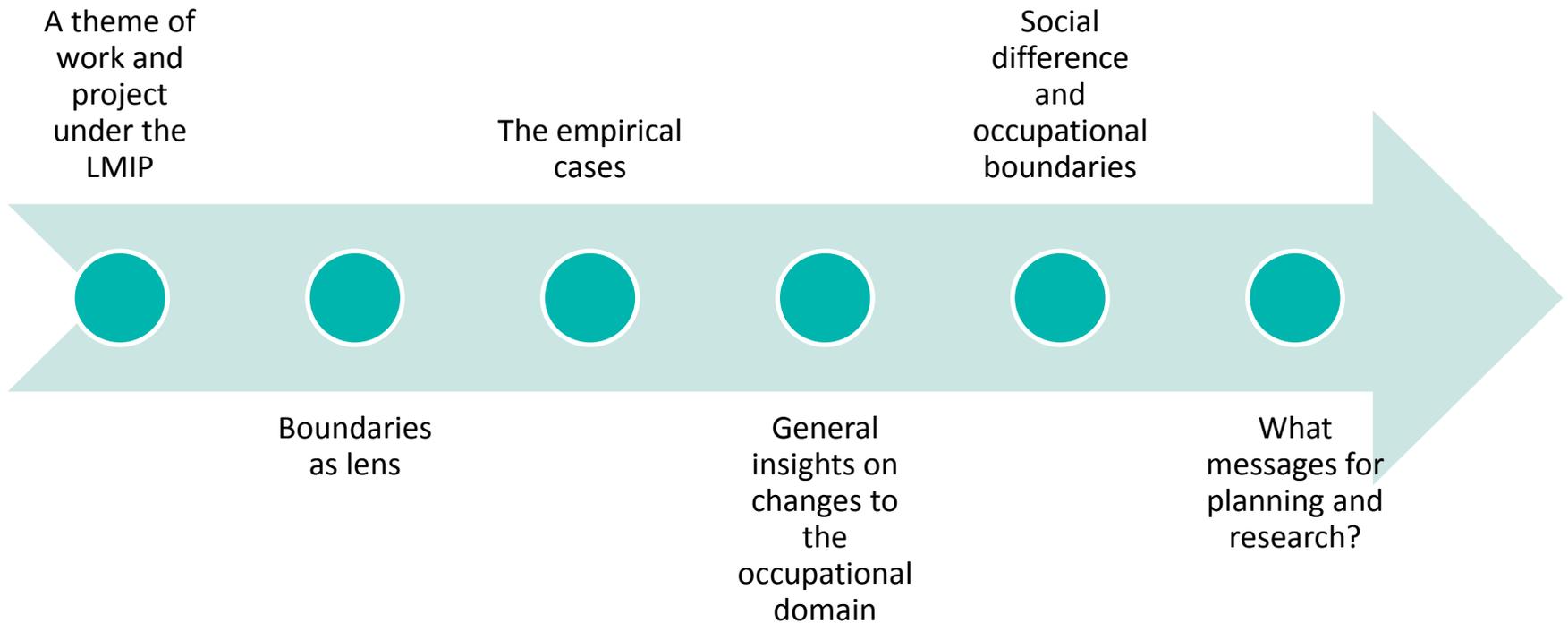


LABOUR MARKET
INTELLIGENCE PARTNERSHIP

The boundaries of artisanal work and occupations, and its intersections with inequality

Angelique Wildschut and Tamlynne
Meyer

AN OVERVIEW



AN LMIP THEME OF RESEARCH ENTITLED **CHANGING ARTISANAL MILIEUS AND IDENTITIES**



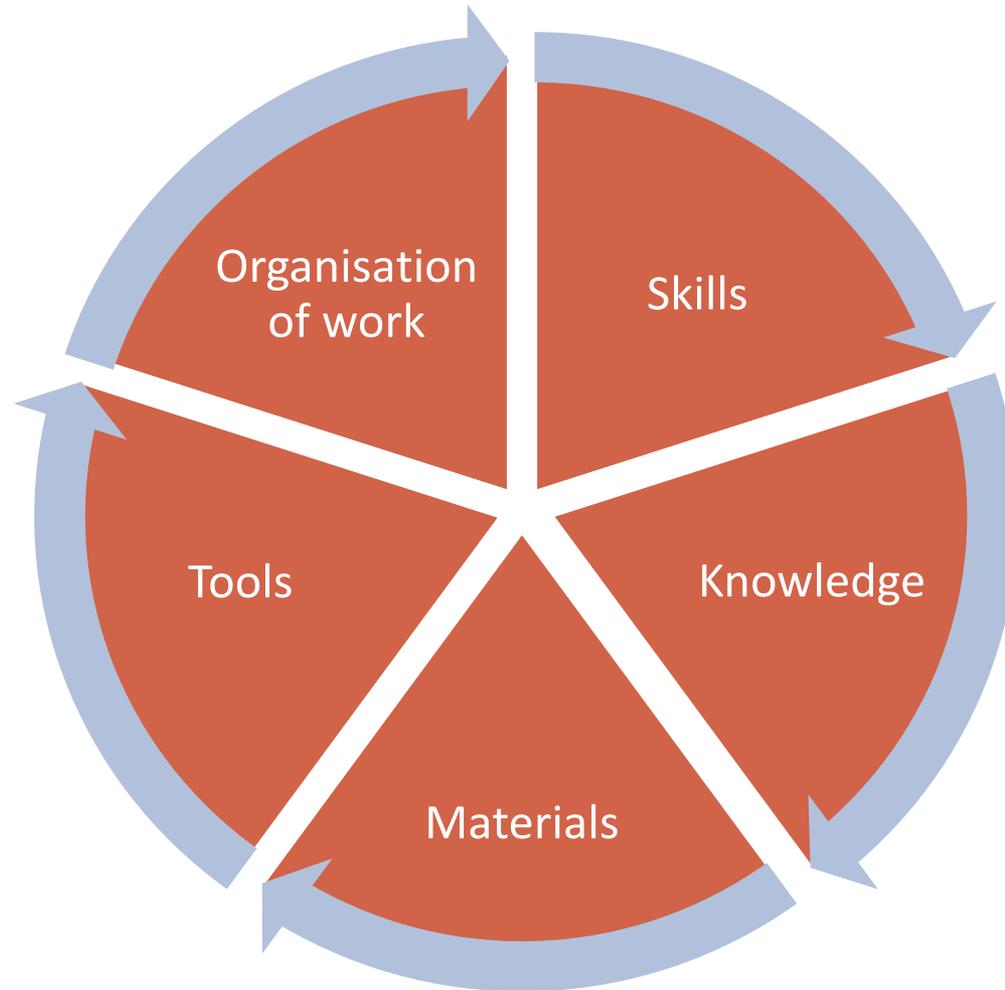
All projects investigate changes to the nature of artisanal work, but from slightly different vantage points and theoretical approaches highlighting:

The impact of history on the nature of artisanal employment and training

Changes to the nature of artisanal work and occupations

Changes to elements of artisanal work and knowledge and its impact on the match between training and practice

THE CONCEPT OF BOUNDARIES: WHY AND HOW?

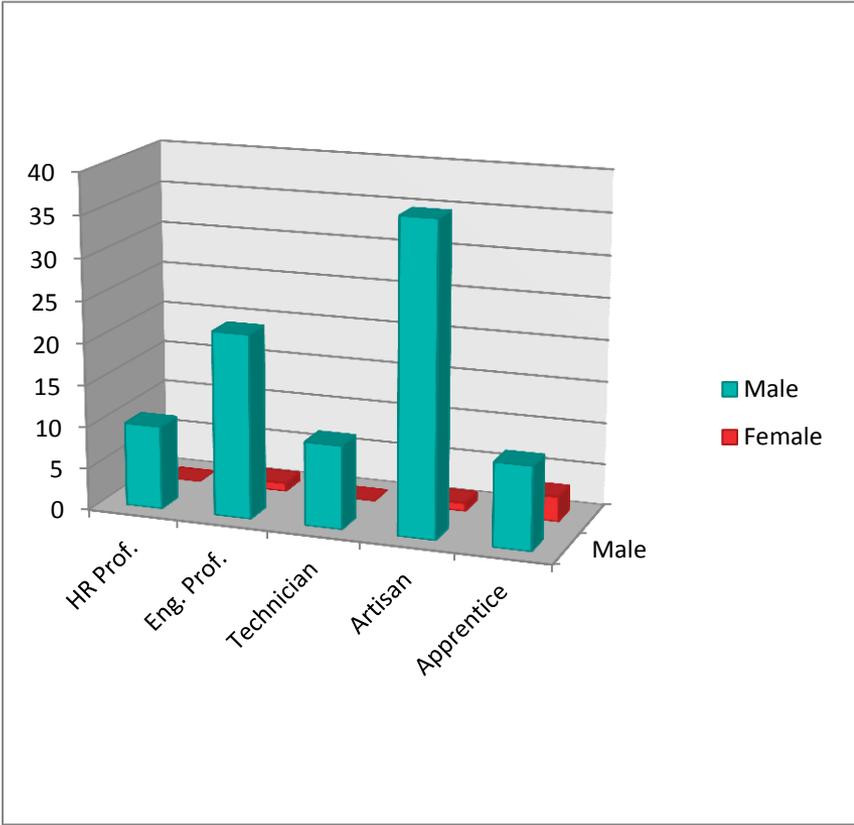


THE EMPIRICAL CASES

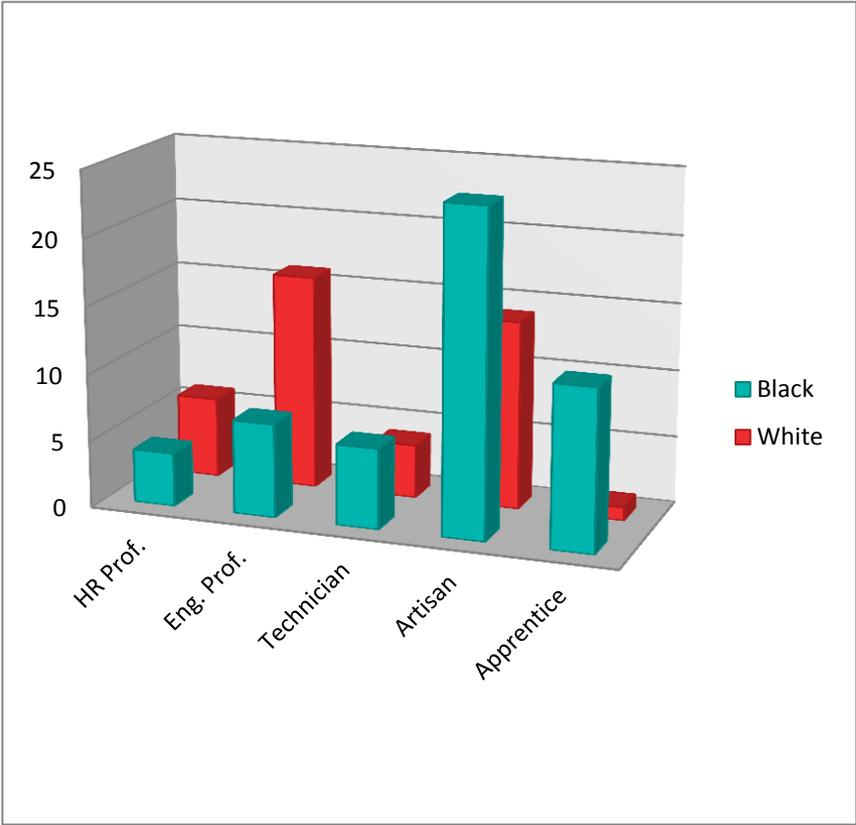
- Case study approach
- Three trades in three industry sectors:
 - Mechatronics (OFO code 671203) in the automotive sector
(Conducted by Carel Garisch and Tamlynn Meyer)
 - Electricians (OFO code 671101) in the mining sector
(Conducted by Xolani Ngazimbi and Tamlynn Meyer)
 - Millwrights (OFO code 671202) in the metals sector
(Conducted by Nicci Malleson and Joan Roodt)
- Fieldwork:
 - The qualitative data consisted of individual interviews with a sample consisting of 94 respondents across five occupational categories.

SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION BY OCCUPATIONAL GROUP

Gender

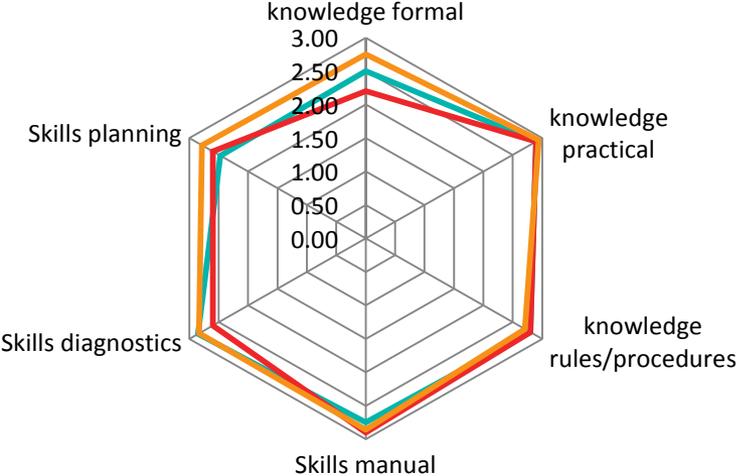


Race

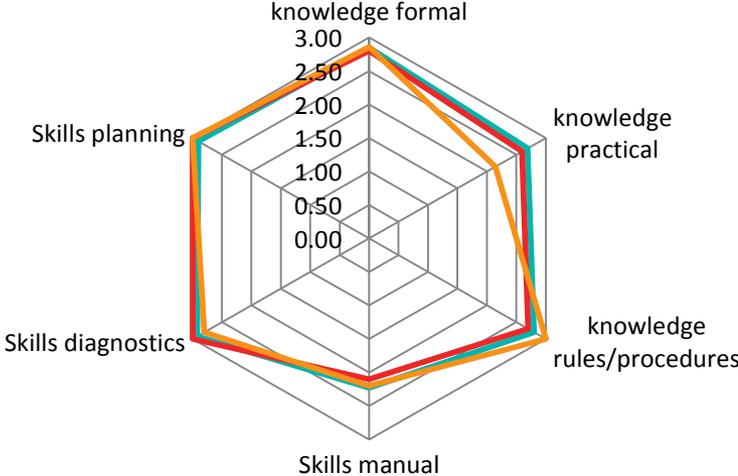


BOUNDARIES BETWEEN ARTISANS AND PROFESSIONALS

Artisans



Professionals



OCCUPATIONAL BOUNDARIES EVIDENT AND RELEVANT



- **Changing in distinct ways:**
 - “companies are going to be forced to recognise these people at a higher level because of what they are going to be able to do – they are definitely not an artisan anymore. And that's why we changed our entry requirements and made it to a higher level just to make sure that we got people who ... are analytical thinkers”.
 - “years ago an artisan was 20/80 – twenty percent theory and eighty percent practical ... right now I do believe that in order to be successful in your field or in the automation field it needs to be like a 50/50 – and even sixty percent theoretical”.

CONTEXT OF ARTISANAL WORK AND TRAINING



- Small and complex system of provision
 -  registrations and completions by individuals from vulnerable groups.
- Employment figures are not far from being racially representative:
 - Race
 - Gender

Why do particular inequalities in artisanal skilling and employment persist and even intensify.

- What is it about artisanal occupations that make them a more acceptable route for men or whites?
- How are people excluded and included?

SOCIAL DIFFERENCE INFORMS THE CONSTRUCTION OF OCCUPATIONAL BOUNDARIES: GENDER



- **Women's reproductive responsibilities**
 - ❑ "... so, we've wasted so much money in this year, on the trainers, on the equipment... just because you couldn't condomise" (automotive sector).
- **Women are not suited to particular types of artisanal work, because of their physical inabilities.**
 - ❑ *"they're [referring to women] probably not interested in manual labour" (automotive sector).*
 - ❑ *I had three of them [referring to women] just trying you hold one spanner and I had to call the other guys just to go and do it so they can see how you do it and after the guys showed them how to do it their biggest problem was that they couldn't pick up a spanner" (automotive sector).*
- **Safety and Hygiene**
 - ❑ *Yeah, so if you needed to go to the bathroom, you need to find a very dark spot there and you must trust someone very much to watch out for you. (mining sector)*
 - ❑ *"Working conditions for women underground are very hard and they have to walk long distances (3km) with heavy rescue pads attached to their hips. The environment is also not good because it has confined spaces and sometimes there is no water or you have to walk far for the water and you get dehydrated...imagine you are a woman very time you dehydrate, will you survive, would you ever have kids?" (mining)*

SOCIAL DIFFERENCE INFORMS THE CONSTRUCTION OF OCCUPATIONAL BOUNDARIES: RACE AND AGE



- Race and age remains important for maintaining occupational boundaries
 - White and older artisans tend to be portrayed as more committed and delivering better quality work.
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- ❑ *“white artisans are inclined to stay at the plant and are loyal” (metals sector)*
 - ❑ *“the older generation followed the previous longer training route to become an artisan. After an 18 month training programme young artisans are not always mature enough to face up to the working environment...” (metals sector).*
 - ❑ *“Let’s say, you know racism, it will always be there in the mines. There’s lots and lots of white people so, somewhere, somehow, yeah, they won’t treat you nicely” (mining sector)*
 - ❑ *“The treatment is not the same... when we did the third year they told us these white guys must write first the trade test. We didn’t come together with them, we came before. Yeah, it’s what was happening in another group as well, it’s the first year but the white guy has to train in one year and then they take him” (mining sector)*

SOCIAL DIFFERENCE INFORMS THE CONSTRUCTION OF OCCUPATIONAL BOUNDARIES: LANGUAGE



- A respondent describes the language dynamic that might arise between an artisan and their assistant
 - ❑ *we have a country full of diversity so sometimes things you say in Afrikaans...this guy maybe he is Xhosa he doesn't understand Afrikaans...So communication is coming in the in between language, English...I'm fortunate I know a bit of Sotho and Tswana so I can communicate well. (mining sector)*
- Another respondent acknowledges the language dynamic in referring to speaking 'their language'.
 - ❑ *Oh yeah, I will say there's a difference but in my case it was different. You know, I'm actually from the Free State. I'm so, yeah; I grew up with white people. I can speak Afrikaans. I know how they are so I'm used to them. (Mining sector).*

A CLOSER FOCUS ON CLOSURE MECHANISMS IS REQUIRED



- Process or strategy of drawing boundaries, constructing identities, and building communities in order to monopolize scarce resources for one's own group, thereby *excluding* others from using them. Occupations are key areas for closure.
- Formal versus informal closure mechanisms
- In a time where formal barriers to access have been removed it is the informal processes which are key sources of inequality in contemporary organisations and occupations (Muzio & Tomlinson, 2012).
- Informal closure intersects with formal closure
- Social differences allows us to understand the process of closure which informs inequality and exclusion.

TOWARDS A POLICY AND RESEARCH AGENDA



- Occupations as socially constructed
- It is important to understand the changing nature of work
- Increasingly important to understand how closure mechanism act within employment

- www.lmimp.org.za
- The project report:
<http://www.lmip.org.za/document/shifting-boundaries-artisanal-work-and-occupations>