NARRATIVES OF NEGOTIATION:
TRANSNATIONAL MARRIAGE MIGRATION IN NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA

by

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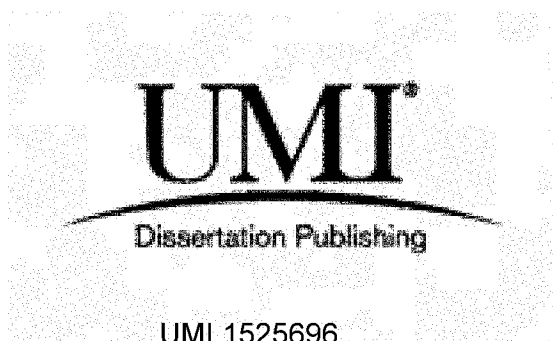UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA

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Abstract

In this thesis, I examine the everyday and particular experiences of seven foreign brides residing in three resource-based communities in northern British Columbia (Prince George, Fort St. John and Dawson Creek), during 2009 and 2010. The intent of my research is to understand how foreign brides' experiences of marriage, migration, settlement and integration influence their reestablishment of sense of self, belonging, place and identity in new and complex environments. Globalization and advancements in communication technologies have shifted the scope and scale of marriage migration to include new players and encompass new landscapes; however, the frequency of this practice and the experiences of foreign brides are often unknown or misunderstood given that no formal monitoring system exists. As such, it is necessary to examine this "hidden avenue" (Nolin 2011) of migration to rural and remote communities within northern British Columbia (BC), as this setting poses limited access to services and cultural networks which can exacerbate foreign bride's already vulnerable sponsorship status and expose increased opportunities for mistreatment and abuse. Thus, to explore foreign brides' experiences in this landscape, I utilize Abu-Lughod's "ethnographies of the particular" (1991) and Nolin's "transnational ethnographies" (2006) as methodological approaches to inform the use of in-depth interviews, Photovoice, and photo elicitation techniques. Findings presented include the identification of four central points of negotiation: i) Marital Relationships; ii.) Family Dynamics; iii) Reestablishment of Independence and Agency; and iv) Cultural Refueling Opportunities and Transnational Connections. By identifying how public and private negotiations shape individual motivations, agency, self-determination, and reinvention, I illustrate how multi-sited and multi-scaled power dynamics influence the reestablishment of foreign brides' sense of place and identity.

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Abbreviations / Acronyms

BC	British Columbia
CDI	Community Development Institute
CIC	Citizenship & Immigration Canada
IMSS	Immigrant and Multicultural Services Society
IRPA	Immigration and Refugee Protection Act
PAR	Participatory Action Research
REB	Research Ethics Board
SSHRC	Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada
UNBC	University of Northern British Columbia

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Chapter 1 : Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Marriage migration is a complex social practice that is deeply embedded within global, local, and individual landscapes of negotiation (Constable 2003b, 163; Lauser 2008, 85). In problematizing hegemonic discourses associated with the 'mail order bride' industry and marriage migration processes (Piper & Roces 2003, 8-9; Constable 2007, 253), this research seeks to recognize the individual and particular experiences of foreign brides currently residing in resourced based communities within northern British Columbia (BC).

To reach this objective, I utilize a transnational and feminist lens to examine foreign brides' settlement and integration, in both familial and community contexts, in efforts to understand the effects that migration, marriage, settlement, and integration have on an individual's sense of self, belonging, place and identity. Utilizing Anthropologist Abu-Lughod's "ethnography of the particular" (1991) and Geographer Nolin's "transnational ethnographies" (2006) to frame my methodological approach, I employ in-depth, semi-structured interviews, Photovoice, and photo elicitation techniques with the aim of bringing the voices, reflections, and particular experiences of foreign brides to the fore. To demonstrate the rigor of this research and support the primary evidence provided, I also utilize literature review to contextualize the contemporary cultural landscape of northern BC.

In combining the abovementioned theoretical frameworks and methodological approaches, I am able to analyze how global, local, and gendered experiences shape the impetus for, and process of, marriage migration, as well as highlight four central points of negotiation encountered during foreign brides' transition into new and complex environments. Building from

the most intimate relationships to broader interactions and experiences, I analyze marital

relationships, family dynamics, perceptions of independence and agency, as well as cultural

refueling opportunities. In exploring these four points of negotiation, I am able to identify how

public and private negotiations in new environments and across transnational social space

(Goldring & Krishnamurti 2007, 1), shape individual motivations, agency, self-determination,

and renegotiation of sense of place and identity.

1.2 Rethinking "Marriage" and "Migration"

When hearing the word '*marriage*', minds are instantly flooded with normative images of

romantic ceremonies and traditional celebrations; yet, the term '*marriage migration*' does not

evoke the same imagery. Instead this term is met with confusion, ambiguity, and

misunderstanding. Often, the term is not recognized until it is paired with descriptive phrasing

such as the 'mail order bride' (MOB) industry, which by association serves to stigmatize the

neutrality of the term (Piper & Roces 2003, 8-9; Constable 2007, 253) and connote marriage

migration as an undesirable, untraditional practice.

Even though the term marriage migration not part of the common vernacular, this practice

is very much a part of contemporary lifestyles, marital practices, and immigration patterns.

While no singular definition exists, marriage migration is understood as the process wherein

intercultural relationships are established, often through the assistance of matchmaking agencies,

introduction services, and/or marriage brokers (Constable 2003b, 13; Belleau 2003a, 94), with

the intent of facilitating a person to internationally migrate for the purpose of marriage (Angeles

& Sunanta 2007, 25). Although seemingly 'untraditional', in contrast to conventionally

recognized archetypes of marriage, marriage migration is historically rooted in the same social,

political, and economic contexts of traditional marital practices (Coontz 2005, 4-16), as well as

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entrenched within modern communication and courtship mechanisms available online (Belleau 2003b, 595; Angeles & Sunanta 2007, 3; Constable 2007, 254; Cabrera 2007, 52; Faier 2007, 149).

Historically and contemporarily, Coontz (2005, 4-16) explains the marital union to be used by individuals, families, and societies as a political and economic institution to protect and/or exploit their needs and desires, acquire status, accumulate resources, consolidate wealth, forge alliances, and secure peaceful interactions among various groups. Moreover, some cultures have used marriage as a method to organize cultural and social ways of life, and as such, marriage is associated with satisfying familial duties, belief systems, and procreation responsibilities. Marriages can be arranged, pluralistic, include partners of the same or opposite sex, and/or occur between partners of different age groups. By the same token, marriages can be empowering and/or oppressive, beneficial and/or destructive, balanced and/or unequal, or a mixture of all possibilities mentioned above. Therefore, given that there are limitless roles and functions of marriage, it is necessary to recognize individual impetuses for entering into marital relationships in order to understand how such relationships shape individual perceptions of belonging, agency, mobility, and overall, sense of place and identity.

1.3 Situating Marriage Migration in Northern BC

BC is understood to have the most varied geography of any province in Canada (Barman 1991, 4) and as such, is faced with unparalleled opportunities and unique challenges. The northern region of the province contextualizes this dynamic, given that the same geography which enables rich natural endowments also poses barriers to the successful settlement and development of the rural, remote, and isolated area of the province. As such, studies focused on northern BC identify how the region's core-periphery relationship with the lower mainland

facilitates locational characteristics often associated with rural and small town Canada, such as marginal populations, service and mobility limitations (Hanlon et al., 2007; Hanlon & Halseth 2005, 3; Markey et al., 2006, 21), and reduced availability of social networks and cultural opportunities (Nolin & McCallum 2007, 145; Rose & Desmarais 2007, 56; Walton-Roberts 2004, 26). In contrast, the lower mainland is one of the largest receiving regions in the country, and as a result, has experienced rapid population growth, significant economic benefits, and extensive urbanization through the expansion of residential and commercial infrastructure (Walton-Roberts 2004, 3; Nolin et al., 2009, 5).

This heartland-hinterland dynamic is not unique to BC; rather, disproportionate growth patterns are straining Canada's largest cities and marginalizing small and medium sized cities (Sherrell et al., 2005; Walton-Roberts 2004; Nolin et al., 2009, 44-45). Recognizing the unsustainable nature of this growth pattern in the early 2000's, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) began the promotion of dispersed settlement as a method of "Sharing the Wealth [and] Spreading the Burden" (Sherrell et al., 2005):

> To date, efforts to encourage immigrants to settle in smaller urban centres have met with limited success. It will be important to further explore how to attract immigrants to smaller centres and persuade them to stay there in order to reduce the pressures on Canada's largest centre (CIC 2001b, 10, as quoted by Sherrell et al., 2004, 3).

While this objective was well intentioned, many recognized how 'attracting' immigrants to smaller centres would pose significant challenges, given the provincial and federal governments' pairing back of the welfare state through the regionalization of services (Sherrell et al., 2005, 4; Walton-Roberts 2004, 3).

Recognizing that there were new questions to be explored regarding CIC's regionalization initiative, Geographer Catherine Nolin, in collaboration with the Community Development Institute (CDI), established the Northern BC Immigration Network in 2007. The

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first phase of qualitative research spearheaded by the network was aimed at understanding how to "Enhanc[e] the Warmth of Welcome in the Communities in British Columbia's Northern Region" (Northern BC Immigration Network, 2013). In exploring the settlement, integration, and retention experiences of immigrants and refugees in northern BC, this project identified barriers and opportunities for attracting and retaining newcomers, as well as identified how service providers could increase their capacity to work with diverse immigrant populations (Northern BC Immigration Network, 2013).

During preliminary fieldwork within the 'Warmth of Welcome' project, Nolin and her research team recognized that many women were arriving in northern BC via new and nonconventional forms of immigration, such as marriage migration (Nolin et al., 2011, 119). Congruently, a publication released by the Immigrant and Multicultural Services Society (IMSS), also recognized an increase of nontraditional female immigrants arriving in northern BC and argued that the northern region had: "not yet developed a coordinated strategy to assist their settlement into the community" (Aldaba-Ferguson et al., 2006, 1). Acknowledging the gap in information and infrastructure, Nolin and the Northern BC Immigration Network structured their second phase of research to explore "Women, Marriage, and Migration" in northern BC (Nolin et al., 2011, 120).

1.4 Narratives of Negotiation: Transnational Marriage Migration in Northern BC

As discussed in depth within Chapter Two, the development of this thesis occurred as a thematic extension of the "Women, Marriage and Migration" project. As a new graduate student, I was interested in pursuing studies which would challenge me to think and work in new ways, collaborate with established research teams, and contribute to the development of important field of knowledge; I was fortunate to experience all of these things in working with Dr. Nolin and the

Northern BC Immigration Network. In building from an established research framework, I was able to explore my interests in landscape, corporeality, identity and place, while simultaneously delving into a relevant social issue.

1.4.1 Situating the Study Context: Identifying 'Knowledge Gaps'

While the arrival of a new immigrant population to any particular region would merit an in-depth exploration, the particular context of foreign brides' settlement and integration within northern BC, poses a set of new and challenging questions. For instance, only three in-depth studies have examined marriage migration in Canada; all three were conducted more than ten years ago and all highlighted the prevalence of inequitable relationships, dependency, and abuse within the marriage migration practice (Philippine Women's Centre of BC, 2000; Langevin & Belleau, 2000; Cotè et al., 2001). Moreover, because no formal measures are in place to track the marriage migration process (Brinig 2001, 321; Del Vecchio 2007, 179), these studies identify that the frequency of this practice and the experiences of foreign brides are often unknown. Since these studies championed the development of this field of research, globalization and the advancement of communication technologies have shifted the scope and scale of marriage migration to include new players and encompass new landscapes (Chun 1996, 1159; Constable 2005, 12; Del Vecchio 2007, 184). Therefore, it is apparent that there is much to be learned about the contemporary process of marriage migration and the experiences of foreign brides.

While the change in the scope and scale of marriage migration presents a significant knowledge gap, the regionalization of marriage migration to rural and isolated communities, such as those in northern BC, raises important questions regarding integration and settlement experiences. For instance, metropolitan centers, such as Vancouver, Montréal, and Toronto, are the largest receiving areas of immigrant peoples in Canada and accordingly have large service

infrastructures to accommodate their immense populations (Walton-Roberts, 2004; Hyndman et al., 2006, 3). In contrast, northern BC is recognized to have a limited service capacity due to economic restructuring, downsizing, and regionalization of services (Hanlon & Halseth 2005, 7; Halseth & Ryser 2007, 241; Markey et al., 2008, 409), which is further compounded by "problem[s] of geography" (Halseth & Ryser 2006, 70), given the remote and isolated nature of this area from core metropolitan areas. Subsequently, when rural settings are juxtaposed with metropolitan landscapes, such as those explored in the three foundational studies in Canada, distinct locational characteristics can be observed, which would offer a much different settlement and integration experience.

Noting these challenges, the intent of this thesis is to develop a greater understanding of the lived experiences of foreign brides in rural, non-metropolitan settings in order to highlight power relations and other characteristics of the social, cultural, and political landscapes, such as limited service networks and multicultural opportunities (Nolin & McCallum 2007, 146), that shape foreign brides' transnational experiences, place making strategies, and renegotiation of identity. As such, this area of study is significant in that it addresses a pertinent social issue within a rural, non-metropolitan context, in addition to providing information for an area of inquiry that is arguably understudied (Belleau 2003b, 596; Constable 2005, 3).

1.4.2 Research Questions

To explore how foreign brides' experiences of marriage, migration, settlement and integration influence their reestablishment of sense of self, belonging, place and identity in new and complex environments, my research is framed by two primary and two secondary research questions:

1. How do the physical, social, and cultural landscapes of a northern community affect the settlement and integration experiences of foreign brides?

   1.1 How have foreign brides' perceptions of social inclusion/ social exclusion shaped their mobility, renegotiation of identity, and place making strategies?

2. Are transnational linkages present and how does that effect place making skills and (re)construction of identity in a new environment?

   2.1 What types of services (i.e. education, employment, and wellness) are available to foreign brides to aid in settlement and integration to northern communities?

Aiming for depth rather than generalizability, I chose to implement theoretical and methodological frameworks which examine the individual and particular experiences of a small study population within the three purposefully selected study communities: Prince George, Dawson Creek, and Fort St. John.

In bringing the voices of seven foreign brides to the fore, I aim to validate their individual and particular experiences, while also advancing the depth of understanding of the marriage migration processes. Moreover, in acquiring a breadth of knowledge regarding particular experiences of marriage, migration, settlement, and integration in northern BC, this research holds the potential to be useful for governmental policy makers and community organizations to recommend strategies and initiatives that could provide enhanced wellness for foreign brides and other non-traditional immigrant groups.

1.5 Chapter Overview

Given the range of material covered within this research, I chose to separate this thesis into two parts: Part One focuses on establishing context and Part Two explores my research

findings. To begin Part One, I utilize the second chapter to position myself as a researcher and my interest in pursuing this research, as well as discuss the methodological approaches that informed the methods I employed during fieldwork, analysis, and the writing up of research findings. Chapter Three provides an in depth literature review of my thematic lenses and conceptual approaches: transnationalism, feminism, corporeality, identity, and place. Moving forward from structural discussions, Chapter Four seeks to contextualize the marriage migration practice by providing the historical and contemporary context of the process, by discussing motivations, rationales, stereotypes and generalizations, as well as experiences of marriage migration in Canada. Moreover, Chapter Five establishes the context for foreign brides' settlement and integration experiences within northern BC by providing an overview of the physical, social, cultural, economic and political landscapes.

In Part Two, I offer my research findings in two separate chapters. While the foundation of my thesis was built on strong research questions and I collected interesting responses during the fieldwork phase, the participant responses did not directly answer the questions posed. Rather, these questions served as a departure point for an in-depth exploration of four central points of negotiation within the women's narratives: (1) marital relationships; (2) family dynamics; (3) perceptions of independence and agency; as well as (4) transnational connections and cultural refueling opportunities. As such, these findings warranted a refocus of how I approached my research questions and the thesis.

Rather than objectify the perspectives shared to conform to the structure of my research questions, I acknowledge the importance of allowing the women's perspectives and understanding to unfold organically within their narratives. In making this choice, I recognize the boundaries inherent within the construction of social knowledge which limit my ability to speak

for the women; therefore, during my analysis I aimed to write from the margins so that I could provide space for situated knowledges to be explored and allow individual voices, reflections, and particular experiences to come to the fore.

As such, Chapter Six focuses on exploring foreign brides' private negotiations within marital relationships and their families. Building from this discussion, Chapter Seven works through public negotiations, both within the northern BC and across transnational social space, in order to highlight the importance of independence, mobility, and cultural refueling opportunities to the reestablishment of place and identity. To conclude, Chapter Eight provides summative discussion, recommendations concerning policy and service restructuring, and identifies additional research opportunities as extensions of this research.

1.6 Conclusion

By examining foreign brides' settlement and integration experiences, in both familial and community contexts through transnational and feminist lenses, this research seeks to gain greater insight into the practice of marriage migration in northern BC. Moreover, in exploring marital relationships, family dynamics, perceptions of independence and agency, as well as cultural refueling opportunities and transnational connections, this research identifies how marriage, migration, settlement, and integration influence foreign brides' reestablishment of sense of self, belonging, place and identity in new and complex environments. In doing so, this research contributes to the development of a greater understanding of the marriage migration process, acknowledges how northern, rural, non-metropolitan landscapes shape settlement and integration, and illustrates how foreign brides negotiate their sense of self, place, and identity in new environments and across transnational space.

Part 1: Research Context

Chapter 2 : Transnationalism, Feminism, Place & Identity: A Literature Review

> By moving along familiar paths, winding memories around places, people create a sense of self and belonging. Sight, sound, smell, and touch are all involved, mind and body inseparable... People's sense of place and landscape thus extends out from the locale and from the present encounter and is contingent upon a larger temporal and spatial field of relationships. The explanation of what is happening moves backwards and forwards between details of everyday existence and these larger forces (Bender 2001, 5-6).

2.1 Introduction

Given that this study encompasses a wide variety of issues surrounding the marriage migration process, I draw upon multidisciplinary resources in order to address the multi-sited and multi-scaled aspects of this inquiry. In the following sections I provide a literature review for the theoretical approaches and conceptual approaches which inform my research design and analysis: transnationalism, feminism, corporeality, place, and identity. When combined, these lenses allow for the critical examination of foreign brides' particular experiences, and as such, provide insight into the complex ways in which marriage, migration, settlement, and integration affect the reestablishment of sense of self, place and identity.

2.2 Theoretical Framework: Transnationalism

2.2.1 Origin of Theory

Transnationalism is a theory used to describe the positioning of people whose sense of belonging, experiences, and daily life span more than one nation (Kearney 1995, 548; Bailey 2001, 413; Goldring & Krishnamurti 2007, 5). This positioning occurs as a result of migration, wherein immigrants produce and maintain social linkages that are simultaneously located within their societies of origin and settlement (Goldring & Krishnamurti 2007, 5). The field of transnational studies emerged in the early 1990's in response to a reconceptualization of

international migration as a global process, rather than static, autonomous, and/or discrete movements (Glick Schiller et al., 1992, 5-6; Levitt 2001, 7; Mitchell 2003, 74; Morokvasic 2003, 114).

2.2.2 Advancement of Migration Theory

Traditionally, linear and circular migration patterns described isolated flows of peoples and rarely incorporated connections to 'home' within the scope of analysis other than describing it as the site of origin, culture or nostalgia (Mitchell 2003, 80; Goldring & Krishnamurti 2007, 3). Yet, qualitative and quantitative changes in migrant practices exposed how past conceptualizations had ignored human agency (Ley 2004, 151) and had minimized the importance of political and historical push/pull forces (Goldring & Krishnamurti 2007, 6-9; Bailey 2001, 416). In resisting these simplifications, transnationalism works to delineate the many ways in which the local and the global are interconnected through the movement of peoples, goods, and communications to construct complex social spaces informed by the context of departure and arrival, and within the everyday experiences of transmigrants (Levitt & Glick Schiller 2004, 1003; Nolin 2001, 59; Mahler 1998, 66-67; Mitchell 2003, 74; Nolin 2006, 148; Levitt & Jaworsky 2007, 130).

Thus, from a transnational perspective, migration is "not a single event but [is to embark] upon a new way of life that places and re-places, individuals and families within a new spatiality, stretching human relations across great distances" (Preston et al., 2006, 1633; Nolin 2006, 148). In providing a way to assess the social and political linkages between sending and receiving countries (Nolin 2001, 59) transnationalism has enabled a multi focal lens (Yeoh et al., 2003, 208) to reexamine how scholars understand migration and mobility (Mitchell 2003, 74; Levitt & Glick Schiller 2004, 1008; Levitt & Jaworsky 2007, 129) and has created an advanced

understanding of how migration influences conceptualizations of space, place, and scale (Featherstone et al., 2007, 384).

2.2.3 Manifestations of Transnationalism

Transnationalism is explained by Smith and Guarnizo (1998, 1) to be manifested "from above" or "from below" through global-local forces which influence cultural processes and national systems. For instance, transnationalism "from above" occurs through the permeation of the nation state by macro-scaled, homogenizing forces such as global capital, media, and political institutions. In contrast, transnationalism "from below" is apparent at the micro-scale by way of informal economies, remittances, nationalism, grassroots activism, and resistance in local spaces (Mahler 1998, 67). Examination of transnational actions and activities from these standpoints enable a comprehensive analysis of the cultural, political, economic, and demographic processes that sustain connections between transnational social fields and across space and time (Faist 1999, 8; Goldring & Krishnamurti 2007, 1).

Given that transnational practices function from 'above' and 'below', transnationalism permeates national boundaries and is "embodied in specific social relations established between specific people, situated in unequivocal localities, at historically determined times" (Smith & Guarnizo 1998, 11). Lauser (2008, 89) corroborates this idea when she describes that migration forces the expansion of an individual's understanding and social connections:

> Living between the "old" and the "new", the "here" and "there", between homes and between languages, (trans)migrants do not merely insert, incorporate or assimilate themselves into existing places, they transform these spaces and create new ones.

These new spaces or "translocalities" (Smith & Guarnizo 1998, 13) are thus recognized as social fields moored within and between the geographical and historical contexts of the immigrants' place of origin and settlement (Mahler & Pessar 2001, 441; Levitt & Glick Schiller 2004, 1006;

Featherstone et al., 2007, 384), given transmigrants' simultaneous embeddedness within more one nation, society, culture, and/or home (Levitt & Jaworsky 2007, 131; Portes et al., 1999, 217).

2.2.4 The Effect of Transnationalism on Individuals

The establishment and maintenance of transnational connections requires transmigrants to negotiate multiple social, cultural, familial, political and economic positions (Glick Schiller et al., 1992, 4-11; Pratt & Yeoh 2003, 163; Levitt & Glick Schiller 2004, 1006), which require new 'ways of being' and 'new ways of belonging' (Goldring & Krishnamurti 2007, 5). As a result of this multi-sited positioning, transmigrants may experience feelings of fragmentation or 'inbetweenness' (Ley 2004, 169-70); alternatively, engagement in new activities and the construction of new relationships may result in the reshaping, hybridization, or multiplication of transmigrants' understanding of self, identity, and culture. Undoubtedly, these multi-local interactions and experiences provide transmigrants with opportunities to negotiate place making strategies and/or identities which either resist or accommodate new constructions of self, "race", ethnicity, gender and nationality within their social fields (Glick Schiller et al., 1992, 12-14; Smith 2009).

2.2.5 Use of a Transnational Lens

Although transnationalism offers an extensive and intensive lens of examination, the scope and scale of this thesis does not permit for all aspects of this theory to be explored. Rather, transnationalism informs my theoretical approach, and as such, my analysis will highlight specific behaviors to explore how foreign brides' transnational experiences affect the renegotiation of sense of self, place and identity. As such, the value in using transnationalism is threefold: 1) a transnational lens allows me to conceptualize the world as a dynamic system, rather than categorizing my analysis within fragmented understandings of specific locations and

networks of influence (Goldring & Krishnamurti 2007); 2) transnational theory will enable me to understand, define and describe how my participants' experiences are situated in, and transformed by, social, cultural, political, and economic conditions of their home and host countries (Nolin 2001, 61; Smith 2009); and 3) awareness of transnationalism 'from above' and 'from below' (Smith & Guarnizo 1998) will allow me to evaluate how power and mobility is manifested within the process of marriage and migration, as well as assess how transnational factors will affect the development and maintenance of social, cultural, political, and financial relationships during settlement and integration (Levitt & Glick Schiller 2004, 1013).

2.3 Theoretical Framework: Feminist Geography

2.3.1 Origin of Theory

Feminist theory originated in the late 1960's and early 1970's, as a part of the women's movement and other social developments aimed challenging the ways in which knowledge is constructed, inequalities are reproduced, and to give voice to those who were/are traditionally ignored, negated or marginalized (Bondi 1990, 161; Bordo 1992, 15; Gorelick 1996, 385-387; Bondi & Davidson 2005, 15). Prompted by the feminist movement, geographers began to critically reflect on fundamental conceptions of space and place to explore how gender informs the ways in which social and spatial environments are experienced and understood (Pratt & Hanson 1995, 1; Johnston et al., 2000, 259). Up until the early 1970's, geographical examination focused primarily on quantitative, empirical and 'objective' analysis of local, regional, national, and global scales with a masculine focus (Johnston et al., 2000, 259; Bondi & Davidson 2005, 15). However, in developing critical discourse which identified how women's spatiality and experiences were taken for granted, devalued, and/or excluded within these scales and analysis, feminist geographers dismantled classical assumptions of gender and lived geographies (Lawson 1995, 451; Bondi & Davidson 2005, 15). As such, this work contributed to the qualitative

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revolution in geography, the reworking of geographic scales of analysis, and influenced the development of other branches of critical geography, as well as inspired new agendas for social justice and activist research which privileges voice and experience (Lawson 1995, 451; Johnston et al., 2000, 259; Kobayashi 2005, 38).

2.3.2 Advancement of Feminist Perspectives within Geography and Migration Theory

One of the key foci of feminist geography is to recognize the effect of gendered dynamics of daily life, and in doing so, promote the understanding that all knowledge is situated and positioned simultaneously in social, cultural, economic and political landscapes, as well as within and between various geographic scales (Haraway 1988, 587; Lawson 1995, 450). From this perspective, feminist geographers argue that classifications of scale should not be considered merely as "empirically identifiable categories through which push and pull factors" can be analyzed; but rather, that scale functions best as a framing device for examining "the power laden, socially constructed, and gender-and-difference-inflected nature of spatial scales" (Silvey 2006, 74). Additionally, feminist geographers contend that human understanding is centered on an a social constructions of knowledge, which is positioned by individual attributes and experiences of gender, sexuality, age, class, "race", ethnicity and nationality (Lawson 1995, 449; Bondi & Davidson 2003, 325). Given this understanding, feminist geographers assert that gender and other social differences cannot be isolated during analysis, but rather should be conceptualized as a fluid process in order to "deconstruct the myth of gender as a product of nature while underscoring its power dimension" (Mahler & Pessar 2001, 442). Beyond lived geographies, feminist geographers also recognize the importance of understanding emotional and imaginative geographies and the way that spatial awareness, subjectivity, embodiment, identity and behavior are informed by gender at a subconscious level (Bondi & Davidson 2003, 325;

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Bondi & Davidson 2005, 21; Bondi et al., 2005, 1). Thus, in unsettling gender binaries and shifting examination to include the multi-sited and multi-scaled experience of individuals, feminist geographers have developed a nuanced understanding of how gender identities are fluid, social constructions created through gendered practices and discourses which reproduce constructed hierarchies of power and privilege (Silvey 2006, 75; Pessar & Mahler 2003, 813).

The incorporation of feminist geography within migration research significantly influenced the understanding of gendered migration patterns and flows, as well as experiences of settlement and integration (Pratt & Yeoh 2003, 160-61). Through critical examination of traditional assumptions and contemporary patterns, feminist geographers identified a dramatic shift in women's purpose and/or motivation for migration, the roles female migrants occupy countries of origin and settlement, and the significant effect of gendered migration on local and global economies (Silvey 2004, 491). Mahler and Pessar (2001, 445) discuss the 'feminization of migration', and argue that this movement requires new understandings of spatial mobility, agency, and power, given that:

> Gender operates simultaneously on multiple spatial and social scales (e.g. the body, the family, the state) across transnational terrains. It is both within the context of particular scales as well as between and among them that gender ideologies and relations are reaffirmed, reconfigured or both.

In understanding how gender organizes actions, agency, and imagination across social space, as well as recognizing the complex ways in which global processes are utilized and/or exploited by individuals, feminist geographers are able to analyze "gendered geographies of power" within certain "power geomet[ries]" (Mahler & Pessar 2001, 446-47). Moreover, by privileging theoretical analysis which explores the social and spatial politics of populations, through a critical focus on gender, citizenship, "race", class, nation, sexuality, religion and disability (Mahler & Pessar 2001, 445; Bondi & Davidson 2005, 15), feminist geographers are able to

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highlight how gender and other social differences function to shape "unequal geographies of mobility, belonging, exclusion, and displacement" (Silvey 2006, 65).

2.3.3 Use of a Feminist Lens

Similar to transnationalism, the scale and scope of feminist theory is too large to be to be fully explored within this research. Instead, I utilize feminist theory in order to: 1) focus on understanding the gendered experiences, politics, and relations which influence how and why foreign brides choose to migrate (Silvey 2004, 491; Mahler & Pessar 2006, 29); 2) engage in the inclusive examination of how gender informs place, identity, and knowledge production throughout process of marriage migration, settlement, and integration (Silvey 2006, 65; Mahler & Pessar 2001, 5); and 3) be aware of the how gendered experiences shape foreign brides' power, agency, mobility, and voice (Pratt & Yeoh 2003, 164; Mahler & Pessar 2001, 441).

2.4 Conceptual Approach: Corporeality

2.4.1 Origin of Theory

The scale of the body is acknowledged as the frontier of experience, as it is the space wherein an individual's physiological, social, and symbolic understanding of the world is mediated and where the boundaries between self and other are created and/or negotiated (Smith 1993, 102; Synnott 1993, 1; Valentine 2001, 15). Contemporary feminist and poststructuralist conceptions regarding the body originated in response to essentialist and constructivist perspectives, which predominated the natural and social sciences until the mid-1960's (Synnott 1993, 23; Longhurst 1997, 489; Valentine 2001, 19). The critical 'turn' towards the current theorization occurred due to the inability of either perspective to adequately address the complexities of both an individual's physiological and social understanding (Synnott 1993, 1; Longhurst 1997, 489; Nettleson & Watson 1998, 8; Moss & Dyck 2003, 62-63). In attempts to move beyond these simplistic classifications and acknowledge the body as both a site and space,

feminist and poststructuralist theories employ essentialist and constructivist perspectives as points of departure within the creation of new theoretical frameworks and analysis (Synnott 1993, 1; Longhurst 1997, 489; Moss & Dyck 2003, 62-63). As such, it is important to understand traditional perspectives in order to effectively explore current viewpoints.

2.4.2 Traditional Perspectives in Corporeal Theory

From an essentialist perspective, the body is the site in which an individual's characteristics are categorized based upon biological differences, such as sex, "race", and ethnicity (Nettleton & Watson 1998, 8; Little & Leyshon 2003, 259; Valentine 2001, 19). Essentialists consider the body to have stable or fixed properties (Valentine 2001, 19) which can be used to differentiate between the physical (body) and the abstract (mind), such as: nature/culture, passion/reason, public/private, white/black, good/bad (Synnott 1993, 25; Longhurst 1997, 490). Moreover, essentialist dichotomies carry sexual connotations, given that positive attributes, such as "reason, subject, consciousness, interiority, activity and, of course, masculinity" are often ascribed to the mind; whereas in contrast, the body is often described subversively as "passion, object, non-consciousness, exteriority, passivity, and of course femininity" (Longhurst 1994, 99; Smith 1993, 102).

The division of the body and mind into binary categories is highly criticized by feminist and poststructuralist scholars, as this type of analysis promotes the disconnect between an individual's experience of physical and imagined self through the creation of "non-reversible, non-reciprocal hierarchies, [that] describe systems of domination" (Longhurst 1997, 490). Essentialist constructions of difference have thus been termed "brute fashionings" (Soja & Hooper 1993, 85) which homogenize individual experiences by refusing the possibility of anything but reductionist dualities (Longhurst 1997, 489; Valentine 2001, 190).

In contrast to essentialism, constructivist theory considers the body to be a surface "for the inscription of society's values, morals, and laws", which is created through the process of being "written on, marked, scarred, transformed or constructed" through social experiences (Little & Leyshon 2003, 259; Nettleson & Watson 1998, 8). Constructivists further argue that the body is materialized within social contexts through the performance of social discourses and the expression of power held by social institutions (Smith 1993, 102; Little & Leyshon 2003, 259; Moss & Dyck 2003, 64).

Like essentialism, constructivist theory has received theoretical scrutiny from feminist and poststructuralist scholars given that the subjective basis of the approach can "render the body incorporeal, fleshless, fluidless, [and] little more than linguistic territory" (Bell & Valentine 1995, 23). Pile and Keith (1995, 4) affirm this notion by commenting that the body should not be perceived as a "passive medium in which cultural meanings are merely inscribed", but rather understood as an active instrument able to resist, adapt, and/or mediate power laden positions.

2.4.3 Advancement of Corporeal Theory

Although poststructuralists and feminists have identified the obvious gaps and limitations within essentialist and constructivist perspectives, they are also quick to note the highly contested nature of contemporary corporeal theories since no one theory is able to comprehensively explain this "site of struggle" (Smith 1993, 102; Synnott 1993, 1). In light of conceptual and definitional difficulties, the human 'subject' is considered by scholars as one of the most challenging spaces to explore in social theory (Nast & Pile 1998, 3), and as such, is argued to have been "negate[d], disavow[ed], deny[ed], and exclude[ed]" (Synott 1993, 2) within analysis, given that it was considered to be too messy, subjective, paradoxical, and problematic to be an accessible scale of analysis (Morgan & Scott 1993, 12; Nettleton & Watson 1998, 2;

McDowell 1999, 36; Little & Leyshon 2003, 259). Longhurst (1997, 494) corroborates the historical subordination of the body within geographic analysis when she describes how the examination of corporeal experiences was deemed "overly subjective and 'nonacademic,'" and to some scholars subversive, given that it might "threaten to spill, spoil, and mess up clean, hard geography." However, the body's ability to mediate a collectivity of different positions, as a result of permeable boundaries between the physical and perceived self, it is now argued by some scholars as the most productive site and space to analyze in order to achieve advancements in the understanding of space, place, gender and identity (Moss & Dyck 2003, 98).

Because the body is considered the "spatial home" (Keith & Pile 1995, 11), feminists and poststructuralists argue for contemporary theory to move beyond representational metaphors in order to prioritize both physiological and social understandings (Moss & Dyck 2003, 98). In doing so, analysis of the body as both the entity and personification of one's lived experiences (Synnott 1993, 1) allows for the in-depth examination of situated knowledges, as well as how subjectivity and power function to construct notions of difference (Keith & Pile 1993, 4; Moss & Dyck 2003, 58). Synnott contextualizes this discourse by commenting on how the body and self are dialectically constituted through both biological and social understandings of self:

> Breasts, thighs, lips, eyes, heart, belly, navel, hair, penis, nipples, anus, brain, guts and balls. Body parts: but also so much more. We have imposed layers of ideas, images, meanings and associations on these biological systems which together operate and maintain our physical bodies. Our bodies and parts are loaded with cultural symbolism, public and private, positive and negative, political and economic, sexual, moral and even controversial; and so are the attributes, functions and states of the body, and the senses.

Given this understanding, the observation of corporeal experiences enables critical theorists to examine power dynamics within multilayered interactions, narratives, organizations, objects, myths, and performances (Tilley 1994, 14-15; Lovell 1998, 6), which correspondingly illustrates how and when social changes occur within a variety of scales (Moss & Dyck 2003, 98). Since

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power is manifested differently within and across social and physiological understandings of self, Pile and Keith (1995, 18) contend that bodily experiences should be regarded as multiple, flexible, and "in-between domains of difference like "race", class, nation, and gender, in the interstices where these domains intersect" (Keith & Pile 1993, 1). This understanding is further reinforced by scholars whom argue that the body should be considered to be in a constant 'state of becoming', provided that an individual's understanding of self is an ongoing process which never reaches "a point of completion or stasis" (Moss & Dyck, 2003, 63; Pile & Thrift 1995,18; Nettleson & Watson 1998,7). Moreover, because the body is continually negotiating power relations, performing self-surveillance, and reproducing behaviors which support one's perception, feminist scholars assert that understanding of self can only be comprised of transitional and temporary states of being (Turner 1992, 3; Gregson 2003, 46).

In destabilizing essentialist and constructivist notions, contemporary theorists are able to generate new understandings about the construction of knowledge and power through social relationships (Longhurst 2001, 2-3; Gregson 2003, 45), as well as acknowledge how physical "bodies have a history and a geography" (Moss & Dyck 2003, 63) which reproduces values, norms, imaginations, and oppressions within different spaces, contexts, and time (Turner 1992, 3). By doing so, theorists can focus on understanding the particularity of individual experiences through the differentiation of natural and cultural awareness, rather than focusing on reinforcing categorizations of difference (Morgan & Scott 1993, 6; Nast & Pile 1998, 1; Moss & Dyck 2003, 63). As such, my research is informed by the concept of corporeality that helps to understand how an individual's physiological, social, and symbolic understanding of the world is mediated by corporeal experience and also to explore where the boundaries between self and other are created and/or negotiated.

2.5 Conceptual Approach: Identity

2.5.1 Origin of Theory

Informed by lived experiences and subjective understandings of everyday consciousness (Rose 1995, 88; Ahktar 1999, 48; Vertovec 2001, 573), an individual's identity concerns their particular understanding of themselves within their environment. Theorizations about identity and subject formation have always been of central interest within geographic study, given that the objectivity of spatial science depends upon the subjective interpretation by the observer (Johnston et al., 2000, 802). Although debates regarding the conceptualization of identity are numerous and span many disciplines, humanist and anti-humanist notions of subjectivity serve as the theoretical foundation within the discipline of geography (Johnston et al., 2000, 802). Similarly to essentialism and constructivism, humanist and anti-humanist perspectives differ according to physical and subjective experiences, which in turn shape individual agency and the structure of one's understanding (Johnston et al., 2000, 802). In order effectively examine contemporary theory regarding identity politics from a poststructuralist and feminist perspectives, a brief review of humanist and anti-humanist suppositions is provided below.

2.5.2 Traditional Perspectives Used within Identity Theory

From a humanist perspective, identity is formed through experiences of one's self and the environment, wherein agency is a key factor in shaping individual understanding, perspective, and knowledge formation (Johnston et al., 2000, 802; Holt-Jensen 2009, 145). Moreover, because humanist standpoints focus on the interpretation of phenomenological experience, the (hu)man perspective is placed at the center of the experiential hierarchy when determining classifications of meaning and value (Johnston et al., 2000, 802; Valentine 2001, 343). This perspective was developed in response to positivist science which emphasizes empirical observations and privileges the testing of quantitative variables (Valentine 2001, 343; Panelli

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2004, 248).

In contrast, anti-humanist or structuralist perspectives were developed in response to humanistic perspectives in order to argue for the recognition of the social, political, economic, and cultural structures which position behavior, instead simply of favoring the comprehension of "surface patterns of human behavior" (Valentine 2001, 347). In questioning the capacity of an individual's subjectivity to singularly inform their identity development, behavior, and actions, given that subjectivity is only one of the many variables structuring the understanding of one's experience, structuralists' aim favor analysis of tangible attributes rather than a subjective positioning of the subject.

2.5.3 Advancement of Identity Theory

Although humanistic and structuralist conceptions of identity have made significant contributions to the field of geography, both theories have also endured scrutiny and criticism by contemporary critical geographers (Mahler & Pessar 2006, 28; Panelli 2004, 139). For instance, feminist geographers argue the humanistic placement of 'man' at the centre of experience as more than incidental phrasing and instead suggest it to connote the continued privilege of gendered experience when this theory was initially developed (Johnston 2000 et al., 802). Moreover, anti-humanist perspectives were critiqued for placing too much emphasis on structural variables, and in doing so, marginalizing the power and influence of physiological experience (Johnston 2000 et al., 802). In moving forward with poststructuralist and postmodern approaches to conceptualizing identity and subject formation, contemporary scholars recognize the importance of individual and particular experiences, positioned by the multilayered experiences of self, such as ethnicity, gender, and sexuality, as well as the ways in which these attributes construct the social, cultural, religious, political, and economic context of one's life (Rose 1995,

88; Smith & Guarnizo 1998, 11; McDowell 1999, 7; Katz 2003, 253; Panelli 2004, 137-139).

In encouraging critical investigations of identity as a "multiply defined and unfixed phenomena, where self is constructed through discourses and social relations" (Panelli 2004, 139), poststructuralist and postmodern scholars highlight how identities are never neutral, permanent, or singular (Valentine 2001, 344). Specifically, contemporary scholars argue the multilayered positioning of the individual to be informed by the fluid and/or malleable nature of physiological and social experiences, power dynamics, and social constructions of difference within time and space (Valentine 2001, 344). Katz (2003, 253) corroborates this notion in stating that identity develops according to historical and geographical perceptions and is also "potentially voluntaristic" given that individuals may choose to express, suppress, or manipulate aspects of their identity in order to create new forms of identification and differentiation. However, it is important to recognize that identity is "not merely something one opts into or out of at different moments, nor are [identities] additive" (Katz 2003, 253); instead, scholars must seek to explore how time, space, and power contextualize one's understanding of self, but also allow or constrain further development of identities (Valentine 2001, 344). Anthropologists Gupta and Ferguson (1997, 12) further elaborate on this fluid conceptualization of self, when they comment that "an identity is something that one "has" and can manipulate, that one can "choose"; or, inversely, it is something that acts as a source of "constraint" on the individual, as ascribed rather than chosen feature of life".

In keeping with the notion of identity as a way of 'being' and 'belonging', critical scholars reinforce the importance of understanding how power functions within the construction of identity, as ideas of 'difference' and 'sameness' "shape, discipline, and position people and the ways they think and act" (Pessar & Mahler 2003, 816; Rose 1995, 104; Katz 2003, 252;).

Similarly, Isin and Wood (1999, 16) describe that conceptualizations of identity are primarily formulated through a "marking [of] difference" or membership, in which an individual identifies themselves in opposition to another individual or group with regard to a shared sense of identification, interests, or belonging (Katz 2003, 252; Panelli 2004, 140). Massey (1994, 170) corroborates the construction of identity as individualistic, fluid, and at times fragmented in commenting that "in counterposition and boundary drawing [and] only by this means, it seems, can... identity be securely established" (Isin & Wood 1999, 17; Katz 2003, 250). Hetherington (2000, 92) situates this notion by expressing that identities are practiced and articulated through the performance of one's body, language, dress, and actions:

> Identity is...associated with processes of self-recognition, belonging and identification with others. Identity is also a way whereby we create forms of distinction between ourselves and those who we see as being like us and those who we see as different. We generally do this by creating divisions between those with whom we identify and those whom we do not. Identity, therefore, is how we do membership and how we include and exclude others from membership of a particular identification.

By recognizing these conceptualizations of identity as fluid and based on a "multiplicity of identities and differences" (Isin & Wood 1999, 16), Gupta and Ferguson (1997, 13) suggest that a more effective conceptualization of identity to be centered on conceiving "identity as a "meeting point"- a point of suture or temporary identification- that constitutes and re-forms the subject so as to enable that subject to act", rather than a fixed conceptualization of self (Nolin 2006, 143).

As previously mentioned, transnational scholars have also made significant contributions to the reconceptualization of identity theory, given their interest in exploring the many ways in which identity is constructed and negotiated on various scales and within social contexts (Glick Schiller et al., 1992, 1; Mahler 1998, 77; Vertovec 2001, 573; Levitt & Glick Schiller 2004, 1006; Goldring & Krishnamurti 2007, 9). In exploring how identities carry "contrasting values

and implications for different people and in varying places" (Panelli 2004, 152) transnational scholars have highlighted the mutually dependent, interconnected nature of identity and places (Chambers 1994, 5; Guarnizo & Smith 1998, 21; Ahktar 1999, 48; Katz 2003, 256; Silvey 2006, 69). Specifically, Guarnizo and Smith (1998, 21) emphasize the relational nature of identity by commenting that identities are "often in a state of 'becoming' rather than 'arrival' [because] personal identity formation in transnational social spaces can be best understood as a dialectic of embedding and disembedding...[as] contextual but not radically discontinuous" (Nolin Hanlon 1997, 7).

One particularly interesting aspect of focus by transnational scholars is the theorization of "simultaneity of experience" (Levitt & Glick Schiller 2004, 1003) which is achieved through the pivoting of self within networks and across social fields located in countries of origin and settlement (Glick Schiller 1992, 4; Smith & Guarnizo 1998, 11; Mahler 1998, 76; Vertovec 2001, 578). As such, transnational scholars argue that because a transmigrant's reality is rooted and/or negotiated within multiple locations, that their sense of identity is positioned by their daily life, interactions, and experiences within both local and global contexts (Smart & Smart 1998, 105; Ghosh & Wang 2003, 278-282). Katz (2003, 256) adds to this discourse in affirming that identities are not homogenized across time and space, but rather, are "altered by the particularities of place and the unevenness of the ways that the social relations of production and reproduction are played at different locations and at different scales" (Glick Schiller et al., 1992, 4; Vertovec 2001, 578).

Although the influence of migration on an individual's understanding of self can never be neatly classified by a singular theory, transnational scholars conceptualization of identity recognizes opportunities for change, transference, and hybridity (Yeoh et al., 2003, 213-214).

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Rather than assume the process of migration as psychologically distressing to all transmigrants, due to the separation of the individual from their contextual site of knowledge and understanding (Chambers 1994, 2; Ahktar 1999, 5; Sengun 2001, 70; Ghosh & Wang 2003, 270), transnational scholars recognize that transmigrants "play by a different set of rules since they live in, or connect with, several communities simultaneously" (Yeoh et al., 2003, 213-214). Nolin Hanlon (1997, 7) expands upon this understanding by suggesting that transmigrants' identities are constantly in flux and must be understood as "a product of some combination of continuities and transformations, resistance and oppression, present conditions and historical realties, community belonging and migrant disorientation". Therefore, in recognizing identity is both created and defined by social and spatial understanding, transnational scholars acknowledge that "there can be no definitive benchmark from which to analyze identity transformation" (Nolin 2006, 142), but instead, one must recognize the different ways in which identity is a product of the way individuals understand and interpret their bodies and subjectivities (Katz 2003, 252).

2.6 Conceptual Approach: Place

2.6.1 Origin of Place Theory

The notion of place is identified as a central concept of understanding in many disciplines within the social sciences; however, because place is a complex notion, with many interconnected meanings and associations, it is also recognized to be one of the most difficult concepts to define (Agnew & Duncan 1989, 1; Rodman 1992, 640; Castree 2003, 167). While acknowledging that there are many overlapping conceptualizations of place, Castree (2003, 167) denotes three broad categorizations: 1) as a location or a specific point on the earth's surface; 2) as sense of place or subjective feelings that people have about places, thus supporting the construction of individual and group identity; and, 3) as a locale or the setting and scale for peoples' daily actions and interaction. In this regard, notions of place can be recognized as

complex networks of understanding, yet, ultimately constructed out of an individual's experiences across time and space (Tuan 1977, 6; Tilley 1994, 19; Castree 2003, 174). Platt (1996, 112-115) corroborates this notion when she suggests that "places capture experience and store it symbolically [...] we create and recreate ourselves out of our experiences", through acts of dwelling within the landscape (Rodman 1992, 642; Massey 1994, 48; Lovell 1998, 1).

Development of place theory, similarly to all other theories and approaches explored in this chapter, was catalyzed by the 'cultural turn' within geography and other social sciences (Mitchell 2000, 60). In arguing against positivist perspectives of 'space', which uncritically focused on the use of objectivity, reason, rationality, empirical observation and quantification (Bailey et al., 1999, 170), critical and feminist geographers called for new approaches which explored subjective experiences of 'place', place attachment and symbolic meanings in order to identify geographies which had been traditionally marginalized, negated, and/or ignored (Staeheli & Lawson 1994, 97; Madge et al., 1997, 90-91; Tuhiwai Smith 1999, 183; Howitt & Stevens 2005, 32). Thus, in focusing contemporary analysis on fluid understandings of place, contextualized by understandings of space, critical scholars creatively and reflexively challenge conventional frameworks of understanding, open new lines of inquiry, promote awareness, and social change (Bailey et al., 1999, 170; Gupta & Ferguson 1997, 4; Smith 2012, 350).

2.6.2 Advancement of Place Theory

Building upon the conceptualizations of corporeality and identity discussed earlier in this chapter, the contemporary theorization of place is organized at a number of social and spatial levels and as embedded within power hierarchies which both structure and influence one's perceptions of the world (Tuan 1977, 33; Rodman 1992, 641; Tilley 1994, 13; Rose 1995, 89). For instance, Tilley (1994, 13) discusses the construction of phenomenological experiences to

require the "consideration of the body as the privileged vantage point from which the world is apprehended", given that physiological experiences create the basis for an individual's subjectivity, understanding, and sense of place. Rose (1995, 89) advances this idea by arguing that sense of place is comprised of personal feelings and symbolic meanings obtained through individual experiences which are shaped "by the social, cultural and economic circumstances" of each particular individual (Tilley 1994, 16-17, 19). Moreover, Rodman (1992, 641) discusses how individual negotiation of power adds to the complexity of place based understandings, by arguing that "places are not inert containers. They are politicized, culturally relative, historically specific, local and multiple constructions". Thus, in recognizing that places are locations of distinct meaning and understanding, and that sense of place is fundamentally grounded in the specific connotations that an individual attributes to and/or learns from their environment, one is able to understand how each individual has a distinct system of meaning though which they make sense of the world (Tuan 1977, 33; Rose 1995, 99; Tilley 1994, 12).

Following notions of positioned understanding, the ability for individuals to identify with a specific place, group and/or locality allows for the creation of belonging and identity, as well as a sense of cohesion and security (Rose 1995, 89; Lovell 1998, 1; Smith 2003, 83). Rose (1995, 92) contextualizes the importance of understanding an individuals' position and location, by arguing that like identity, sense of place can be constructed out feelings of difference and disconnection, through constructions of 'self' and 'other'. Furthermore, McDowell (1997, 2) corroborates the mutual construction of identity and place within social contexts by asserting that place formation and place meanings are dialectally developed through boundary drawing, exclusion, and transgression which are ultimately shaped by an individual's social, cultural, gender, economic, and political positioning.

In recognizing that boundary construction may lead an individual to not be able to identify with specific places or groups, Tilley (1994, 20) and Rose (1995, 89) suggest that such individuals may feel a sense of disconnection or 'placelessness'; thereby, impeding or inhibiting their ability to feel a sense of belonging or place in their new environment. In contrast, Katz (2003, 250-252) and Levitt & Glick Schiller (2004, 1006) conversely suggest the experience of 'difference' to assist in the development of stronger place attachment, as the establishment of boundaries between specific places and groups enables individuals to 'place' themselves within spaces which they do (or do not) belong. Massey (1994, 321) situates boundary drawing and sense of place within the context of globalization by suggesting that sense of place can be sustained without being rooted within one specific place or locality, given that the increased interconnectivity of the world has enabled the de-territorialization of an individual's relationships and networks of place association. Lovell (1998, 5) corroborates this notion of multi-situated locality and belonging and argues that a sense of place can instead be maintained through the expression of oral histories, narratives of origin, objects, myths, rituals, and performance, she states that:

> Culture [...] is not necessarily tied to particular places, but is rather created at the interstices between people in their interaction with one another in everyday discourse which may be localized, but also in the everyday experiences of extraordinary events [...] Locality in this sense become multivocal, and belonging itself can be viewed as a multifaceted, multilayered process which mobilizes loyalty to different [places] simultaneously.

Subsequently, one is able to acknowledge the importance of deterritorialized locality to transmigrants' conceptualization of place and belonging, given that dislocation from one's place of origin does not necessarily limit their ability to feel connected within transnational social fields. Instead, notions of belonging "transcend[s] both local and national boundaries in order to encompass identity as it is temporally mobilized and crystallized at particular moments (Lovell

1998, 6; Levitt & Glick Schiller 2004, 1002). Agnew and Duncan (1989, 7) further confirm this notion through their suggestion that conceptualizations of place to should be progressively understood in multi-local, multi-situated contexts, they comment:

> Place, both in the past and in the present, both in the third world and in the first, serves as a constant re-energized repository of socially and politically relevant traditions and identity which serves to mediate between the everyday lives of individuals on one hand, and the national and supra-national institutions which constrain and enable those lives, on the other.

Accordingly then, because places are not just "motionless things, frozen in time", Massey (1994, 154-155) argues that conceptualizations of place should thus be interpreted not only though historical linkages, but as progressively negotiated or "constructed out of a particular constellation of social relations, meeting and weaving together at a particular locus". This understanding is specifically contextualized through migrant experiences of place by Nolin Hanlon (1997, 9), who in following Agnew's (1993, 69) concept that "cultural worlds are grounded geographically in the experience of place", affirms that transmigrants' adjust their sense of belonging and place throughout the migration process to encompass transnational social connections by stating: "places of origin shap[e identity], yet with the shifting of place and time, identity does not fall apart. It is re-vitalized and re-shaped in the metamorphosis of meaning". Therefore, a framework of analysis that is sensitive to each individual's multi-faceted conceptualization of social and spatial experiences within and across nations, as well as based on their personal understanding of racial, gender, or cultural differences, is necessary to understand how an individuals' sense of place and identity may be negotiated (Massey 1994, 169; Bondi, 1993, 98; 1997, 7).

2.7 Conclusion

From the conclusions drawn by the aforementioned theorists, I aim to suggest, through the adoption of a transnational and feminist framework of analysis, that a foreign bride's corporeal experience in the place of settlement, as well as her transnational lived experience of her place of origin, combine to create a multi focal sense of belonging and identity that is malleable and dynamic (Mahler 1998, 79; Lawson 2000, 173; Levitt & Glick-Schiller 2004, 1003; Goldring & Krishnamurti 2007, 5). In doing so, the bride's bodily space can be understood as the social field through which her sense of place and identity is created; however, given that neither sense of place or identity are fixed and permanent conceptualizations, their fluidity creates opportunities for "new ways of being" and "new ways of belonging". Therefore, in examining how everyday lived experiences of transnational marriage migration, settlement, and integration are negotiated through physiological experiences, multi-local perspectives, and within social spaces, I aim to understand the ways in which foreign brides' sense of self mediates their daily interactions, identity, and sense of place.

Chapter 3 : Methodological Approaches & Methods

3.1 Introduction

Contemporary qualitative scholars recognize the need for transparency within the research design process and call for discussion about the methodologies which inform the selection of research approaches, as well as the methods used to gather evidence (Madge et al., 1997, 8; Nast 1994, 58). In writing about these processes, researchers are able to reflect upon the tensions associated with conducting research, validate the appropriateness of the selected lenses and/or techniques, and discuss how rigor is established in their research process (Baxter & Eyles 1997, 505). Recognizing the value of this approach, this chapter begins by situating myself as the researcher, followed by an explanation of the methodological approaches that support the research design, review of the ethnographic methods employed while in the field, and description of the qualitative methods applied during analysis.

3.2 Positioning the Research(er)

Traditionally, methodological discussions have omitted researchers' personal motivations for pursuing a particular area of study, given that this type of information was perceived as un-objective or un-scientific, and therefore unrelated to the research findings (Clifford 1986, 2; Dowling 2005, 25). However, many social scientists now argue that understanding the researcher's positionality is an essential component of the research product, as the exclusion of this information limits a complete understanding of the research process and removes a crucial component of understanding from the research record (Clifford 1986, 2; England 1994, 86). In recognizing this deficiency, contemporary qualitative researchers now argue for transparency regarding the researcher's position in the research relationship, critical reflexivity concerning

how the researcher's positionality shapes the development of the research process, as well as for discussion of "partial truths" given the researcher's interpretation of data (Clifford 1986; Behar 1996, 6; England 1994, 87). I agree with this argument, and as such, I provide a brief overview of my positionality and my interest in this topic in the following paragraphs.

During studies as an undergraduate student at the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC), I was challenged to examine human interactions within a variety of settings and scales in order to explore culture and its influence on power, gender, communication, representation, and identity. Interdisciplinary coursework provided me with a breadth of experience and fostered my interest in developing a greater understanding of sense of place, identity, and issues of social inclusion/exclusion through the examination of diverse social and cultural landscapes. With this research framework in mind, I approached Dr. Catherine Nolin whom I credit for significantly shaping my interest and understanding in these areas, regarding my interest in pursuing a Master of Arts degree with a Human Geography focus. Provided that my interests linked well with Dr. Nolin's current research foci, she proposed that I utilize transnational marriage migration as the thematic lens of my study and construct a thesis project as an extension of her "Women, Migration, Marriage" project.

Prior to beginning graduate studies, my awareness of marriage migration was limited to the brief overview Dr. Nolin provided within her Geography of International Development course[1]. To gain familiarity with the topic, I embarked on a preliminary literature review and was dismayed to learn of the complex and intense vulnerability associated with marriage migration, as well as the hidden and often unacknowledged nature of this process. Moreover, I was surprised by the polarized approach to examining marriage migration, how brides and grooms

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[1] UNBC Geography 306: Geography of International Development

were generalized as either villains or victims, and how most literature failed to represent the particular context and voices of those involved in the process. Although these significant knowledge gaps catalyzed my interest in the topic, I chose to immerse myself in this topic for personal reasons. As someone who struggled with feeling disconnected and having a sense of placelessness as a result of numerous disruptive relocations throughout my childhood, my positionality caused me to identify with how potentially transformative this type migration process would be. Moreover, at this time I was newly engaged; from this position, I understood how the pressures and changes associated with a new marriage, the blending of two families, and the start of a new life together could be both an exciting and challenging experience to negotiate. Although I was very much aware that my experiences were not comparable, I felt a personal connection to this topic and became interested in developing a thesis which privileged the voice and experiences of foreign brides.

As such, my intent is to respectfully acknowledge the individual and particular experiences of foreign brides in rural, non-metropolitan settings within northern BC to understand how the process of marriage migration, settlement and integration have shaped their transnational experiences and renegotiations of place and identity.

3.3 Methodological Approaches

The methodological approaches outlined below were selected based upon their applicability to the thesis topic, as well as for the influence these frameworks have had in shaping my perspective and positioning as a researcher.

3.3.1 Ethnography of the Particular

My exposure to the "ethnography of the particular" (Abu-Lughod, 1991) method occurred during graduate coursework, wherein I was challenged to see beyond traditional approaches and instead identify research methods which prioritize reflexivity, ethical conduct, and rigor and over 'objective' research design. Like many other social and cultural scientists (Clifford 1986, 2; Marcus & Fischer 1986, 8-9; Geertz 1988, 33; Gilbert 1994, 91; England 1994, 81; Tuhiwai Smith 1999, 183), Anthropologist Abu-Lughod (1991, 149) criticizes traditional ethnographic research methods for contributing to the construction of the 'other' through the observation, representation, categorization, and generalization of peoples and cultures. Instead, Abu-Lughod (1991, 157) offers the "ethnography of the particular" methodology in order to provide rich understandings of time and place, as well as convey the inner life and texture of individuals and their particular, everyday experiences.

By bringing forward narratives of everyday life, Abu-Lughod (1991, 151) argues that researchers are able to ethically and rigorously create narratives which acknowledge "the effects of the extralocal and long term processes [which] are only manifested locally and specifically, produced in the actions of individuals living their particular lives, inscribed in their bodies and their words". Moreover, Abu-Lughod (1991, 151) notes the "ethnography of the particular" methodology can reduce the construction of participants as inferior 'others', and challenges associated with power, gender, voice, representation, by bringing forward everyday language.

3.3.2 Transnational Ethnographies

In recognizing the value of the "ethnography of the particular" approach, Nolin (2006) utilizes this methodology to frame the development of her "transnational ethnographies" method. In doing so, "transnational ethnographies" enable the exploration of everyday lived experiences

and privilege the voice of participants in order to "reveal the diversity of people, the commonalities of experience, and the profoundly transformative role" that particular encounters play in shaping individual understanding of self and place. Accordingly, "transnational ethnographies" enable researchers to address how "transnational culture and new social relations are played out through individual lives, in particular places and at particular times" and facilitate an in depth understanding of the richness, complexity, and interconnectedness of participants' transnational social space (Nolin 2006, 122).

Thus, in recognizing the importance of understanding foreign brides' particular experiences and the effect lived experience has on the negotiation of sense of place and identity, I will utilize Nolin's (2006) "transnational ethnographies" technique informed by Abu-Lughod's (1991) "ethnography of the particular" as the methodological approaches framing this work.

3.3 Methods

This research employs a mixed method approach to participant selection, data collection, and analysis. Each method was selected in accordance to its suitability to address both the research questions and to respectfully explore the experiences of the participants. Bradshaw and Stratford (2005, 69) indicate that the careful design of research enables the construction of a more comprehensive and valid product, given that "each method helps us to answer different research questions, employs different research methods, has different limitations, and ensures rigor differently". Selection of appropriate research methods is further discussed by Madge et al., (1997, 103) who comments that reflexivity is essential to the effectiveness of the research process:

> Conducting ethical research does not involve a simple set of formulae; rather it entails thinking through the process of working and living with people and attempting to challenge unequal power relations upon which differences rest.

Moreover, Nast (1994, 58) asserts that when used appropriately, mixed methodologies have the ability to "promote mutual respect and identification of commonalties and differences between the researcher and the researched in non-authoritative ways", in addition to allowing 'others' to be heard and empowered. Therefore, my use of multiple research methods enables a more rigorous and inclusive research product, in addition to implementing "multiple modes: doing, hearing, seeing, writing and reading in different ways in order to uncover...multiple and varied experiences" (Madge et al., 1997, 98).

3.3.1 Research Approval

Prior to the commencement of fieldwork, I completed the required coursework for my program which included courses on both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, a directed course reading on migration and transnationalism, and an Anthropology course focused on landscape, space, and place. The breadth of learning acquired from this coursework prepared me to successfully defended my thesis proposal[2] and receive approval from the UNBC Research Ethics Board (REB) in April of 2009 (See Appendix 1). In May of 2009, I was awarded a Joseph Armand Bombardier Canadian Graduate Scholarship from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), in recognition of the pertinence of this research topic.

3.3.2 Population Selection

To appreciate the individual complexity and particularity of transnational marriage migration, I explore the experiences of seven foreign brides living in three northern communities: Prince George, Fort St. John, and Dawson Creek. As a thematic extension of the "Women, Migration, and Marriage" project, I benefited from numerous opportunities afforded through the association of this thesis with an established and reputable research project. Through

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[2] Dr. C. Nolin, Supervisor; Drs. A. Smith & G. Halseth, Committee Members

my Research Assistantship with Dr. Catherine Nolin and the Northern BC Immigration Network[3] I was provided with access to a breadth of information on the topic of marriage migration, exposure to my proposed study population, given the opportunity to gain skills and build trust during my participation in key informant interviews and focus groups, as well as facilitate the Photovoice component of the "Women, Migration, and Marriage" project.

Moreover, given the formally undocumented nature of marriage migration (Brinig 2001, 321; Del Vecchio 2007, 179) and the sensitive nature of this topic, participants for this research project would not have been identifiable without the assistance of Immigrant and Multicultural Services Society (IMSS), whom in partnership with the Northern BC Immigration Network, established a contact database of prospective participants to which I was provided access. In addition to assistance from IMSS, I also established rapport with key contacts, or "gatekeepers" (Seidman 2006, 45) at SUCCESS Northern BC Newcomers Integration Service Centre (NISC) in Fort St. John and the Fort St. John Literacy Society, who were further able to identify prospective people within the target population. The credibility of this research project was greatly enhanced by the support and assistance of IMSS, SUCCESS, and the Literacy Society.

3.3.3 Ethnographic Field Methods

In total, twenty women were identified as potential participants and initial contact was made through phase two follow up of the "Women, Migration, and Marriage" project. Scoping interviews were established with sixteen potential participants in order to gauge their interest in the project, as well as to determine whether (or not) their experiences fit the criteria of the target population. Scoping interviews are a valuable research instrument because they enable the researcher to assess the effectiveness of the research framework and interview questions

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[3] My Research Assistantship with Dr. Catherine Nolin and the Northern BC immigration Network took place from September 2008 to December 2009.

(Bryman & Teevan 2005, 106). Moreover, by utilizing scoping interviews, I was able to employ "snowball sampling" (Babbie 2004, 184) techniques, in that I asked participants to recommend other potential contacts (Babbie 2004, 184; Bryman & Teevan 2005, 227-28).). Although numerous participants alluded to having friends or acquaintances with 'similar experiences', no further participants were gained through this method.

From the sixteen preliminary scoping interviews, seven participants were purposively sampled based upon the criteria they had immigrated to Canada through the sponsorship process for the purpose of or result of marriage. Nine of the twenty possible participants did not match the target population criteria, and four of the twenty women contacted declined to participate or did not respond to invitations to participate. Identified participants were informed that their participation the "Women, Migration, and Marriage" project and my thesis research was completely voluntary (Appendix 2 & 3) and that they were able to participate in either or both projects if they chose to do so. All seven identified participants expressed interest in participation in both projects, and as such, interview processes and data collection between the two projects were streamlined to reduce redundancy.

Given the sensitive nature of this study, it is possible that potential participants identified by gatekeepers and/or snowball sampling techniques were unwilling or unable to participate as a result of restrictive power dynamics. Although, information from these individuals would have further broadened the range of experiences explored, I understand that their lack of participation may be equally as valuable; as silence serves "not as a barrier to overcome, but rather, an instructive part of the research process" (Mountz et al., 1997, 39) by alluding to the range of factors which influence experiences of the marriage migration process.

Few scholarly articles discuss the rationale surrounding the recruitment of participants and the justification of the sample size (Bailey et al., 1999, 169; Baxter & Eyles 1997, 508), given that "the validity, meaningfulness, and insights generated from qualitative inquiry have more to do with...information richness...and the observational/analytical capacities of the researcher than with sample size" (Patton, as quoted (emphasis in original) in Bradshaw & Stratford 2005, 73). Similarly, Baxter and Eyles (1999, 181) recognize that quality information from a single research participant may be more contextually valuable than hundreds of mediocre examples. I agree with the above statement and argue that although my study population is relatively small, rigor was achieved through the use of the partial "transnational ethnography of the particular" approach (Abu-Lughod, 1991; Nolin 2006). The depth and range attained during intensive conversations serves to illustrate the invaluable knowledge obtained through this method. Therefore, by seeking transferability rather than generalizability[4] of experiences, I aim to rigorously contribute to the growing field of literature on the topic of marriage migration.

3.3.4 Interviewing

As previously discussed, scoping interviews were conducted with participants to verify their suitability for this research project. These interviews employed a semi-structured conversation guide (Appendix 7) intended to explore both pre-immigration and post-immigration experiences, with particular focus on their marital relationship, process of sponsorship, and settlement and integration experiences in northern BC. Prior to the interview conversations, I provided participants with an information sheet (Appendix 2) which described the research project in detail, as well as asked the participant to review and sign a consent form (Appendix 4)

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[4] While generalizability is often the objective of quantitative studies, qualitative studies recognize that no two situations or contexts are identical, and therefore seek to understand how learning and knowledge can be transferred and applied in another context. Accordingly then, I have chosen to seek transferability in order to both value the situated and particular nature of my participants' experiences and be able to speak to broader social issues.

to illustrate their interest in participating. Participation in this study was entirely voluntary and participants were informed that they have the right to refuse response to any question(s) or withdraw from the interview entirely at any time; at which time all information about their participation, as well as all information provided within the project would be destroyed. Moreover, I provided participants with the option of using their own name or a pseudonym (of their preference) in order to maintain anonymity and confidentiality within the research results[5]. Moreover, I inquired with participants regarding their preference of descriptive terminology (such as 'mail order bride', foreign bride, or any other term of their preference) in order to describe their experience of marriage and migration. I invited participants to ask questions about the research project, as well as ask about my background, as a way to demonstrate openness within the research process and to build trust.

Each interview utilized a conversation guide (Appendix 7) which consisted of both primary and secondary questions, in order to direct the flow of discussion and to also provide flexibility and space for reflexive responses to be given (Dunn 2005, 82). Since the interview questions sought very personal and sometimes sensitive information from participants, the questioning framework was structured according to the "funneling" method (Dunn 2005, 85). As such, interviews began with very general questions to initiate discussion and were supported by secondary questions which sought further explanation and/or clarification allowing for "conversational development towards more sensitive issues" (Dunn 2005, 85). This "ordered, but flexible" approach was imperative to establishing a solid contextual understanding, as well as developing rapport between the participant and myself (Dunn 2005, 88).

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[5] Each participant selected their own pseudonym for use within this research. In order to distinguish the use of pseudonyms from academic references cited within the research findings, pseudonyms are represented in capital letters.

Each participant chose the date, time, location, and duration of her interviews. Some participants preferred to conduct the interview in the comfort and privacy of their home, which enabled them to also engage in their regular practices (such as looking after their children and maintaining business hours for their home business). For other participants, it was important to meet in a familiar public place, such as a café or restaurant, which facilitated a more relaxed and informal environment. Additionally, some interviews and follow up conversations were conducted in meeting rooms at UNBC, at both the Prince George and Fort St. John campuses, when extra space and technology (to view photographs and film) were necessary. Preliminary interview conversations generally lasted about two to three hours; however, I conducted numerous follow up visits given that the scheduled when participants wanted to expand upon our initial conversations. Additionally, I scheduled secondary interviews with each participant so that we could discuss the Photovoice component of the research.

In my initial research design I proposed to conduct focus groups as a way to explore multiple lines of communication and accommodate participants who may have found "one-on-one, face-to-face interaction 'scary' or 'intimidating'" (Madriz 2003, 364). However, this method was not necessary, as each participant was comfortable participating in an individual interview and some participants had already participated in an earlier focus group with the "Women, Migration, and Marriage" project. Moreover, in the months leading up to the second phase of the project and my thesis research, tensions within the Filipino community in Fort St. John inhibited the possibility of additional focus groups[6].

My participation in the preliminary focus group, conducted in Fort St. John, was an invaluable to the development of my own research, as the setting was conducive to discussion

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[6] For more information on the tensions present in Fort St. John's Filipino community, please see Chapter Eight.

and interaction between participants which provided me with a provided a greater contextual understanding because participants could "explore different points of view, and formulate and reconsider their own ideas and understandings" (Cameron 2005, 117). Furthermore, the opportunity to participate in this focus group as a note taker allowed me to build trust and rapport with participants, as well as enabled me to ask informed questions that validated the information they had already shared during the focus group. As such, the focus group served to neutralized some of the power dynamics inherent within the participant and researcher relationship, as participants felt as though I had truly listened to the individual experiences they had shared.

3.3.5 Photovoice & Photo Elicitation

Given that my thesis research is a thematic extension of "Women, Migration, and Marriage" project and this phase of research coincided with my Research Assistantship with the Northern BC Immigration Network, I was provided with the opportunity to facilitate the Photovoice component of the project and utilize data collected within my thesis research.

Photovoice is an innovative participatory action research (PAR) method that enables participants and researchers to engage in a collaborative partnership throughout the planning, implementation, and discussion of photography, in order to co-create knowledge (Wang & Burris 1997; Castleden et al., 2007, 1394; Lorenz & Kolb 2009, 263). By sharing control of the research process, Photovoice aims to establish an balanced power structure within the researcher-participant relationship (Castleden et al., 2007, 1394) and privileges participants to be the recorder of their knowledge, experiences, and expertise (Lipert & Smith 2009, 137). Moreover, the Photovoice process can facilitate the visual documentation of situations which are difficult to describe or are sensitive in nature, and engage vulnerable participants who typically hold less power and status within dialogue for change (Lorenz & Kolb 2009, 262; Strack et al., 2004, 49;

Wang & Burris 1997, 369). Moreover, Photovoice is acknowledged to catalyze discussion, particularly for participants who have low literacy or decreased verbal skills, which in turn can elicit rich data about the context of peoples' experiences and encourages greater depth, authenticity, and validity in the interpretation of qualitative findings (Lipert & Smith 2009, 137).

Equipment for this research project, such as digital cameras, memory cards, batteries, journaling supplies, and return postage were provided by the "Women, Migration, and Marriage" project[7]. All materials supplied to participants within the project were provided as honorariums to acknowledge the time and effort provided throughout their participation. During preliminary meetings, I provided participants with all necessary materials and gave a brief tutorial on how to operate their new cameras, provided with information sheets (Appendix 3) which described Photovoice and the assigned task, consent forms for their participation (Appendix 5) and the release of creative materials (Appendix 7), provided participants with the opportunity to ask questions about Photovoice and the project as a whole. Lastly, I informed participants that, with their consent, their photographs might be displayed within a future community exhibition as a way to generate dialogue understand participants' experiences of marriage and migration.

Over a one month period, participants were asked to take photographs, and to provide brief journal entries, to describe their experience of marriage migration and settlement within northern BC. Participants were encouraged to take as many or a few photographs as they liked and informed that the photographs and journal entries would be used as a way to talk about their experiences during interview discussions (Appendix 3). During this process, I kept in frequent contact with participants in order to encourage their participation and check on their progress.

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Due to the intensive schedules and lifestyles of my participants the duration of photo taking and journaling time was extended from one month to six months.

Over the course of the exercise, participants expressed concern and uncertainty regarding their ability to capture the 'right experiences' and also felt self-conscious about their journal entries due to their inability to write proficiently in English. During these conversations, I reinforced that there was no 'right' answer, picture, or description and encouraged participants to engage in the Photovoice process in whichever way they were most comfortable. As such, some participants chose to limit the length and detail of their responses and instead explore their experiences within the follow-up interview; other participants felt more comfortable providing their journal entries electronically, so that they were able to conduct a spelling and grammar checks.

Follow up interviews were scheduled with each participant to explore their photographs and journal entries, and interestingly, all participants submitted personal photographs in order to describe the range and timeline of their settlement and integration experiences. Photo elicitation techniques[8] were used to review photographs, in conjunction with journal entries. Follow-up interviews lasted between two to four hours and explored participants' experiences of marriage and migration and perceptions of place and identity in extraordinary detail. Moreover, photo elicitation allowed for the communication of "intangible aspects of culture and [brought] about information-especially emotions- that remained hidden during verbal interviews" (Lorenz & Kolb 2009, 263). Without question, the use of Photovoice greatly enhanced the scope and depth of information I was able to achieve within interviews and serves as an excellent point of reference in the rigorous comparison and triangulation of data.

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[8] Photo elicitation is the process wherein photographs are used to stimulate discussion, as well as to evoke deeper elements of the human consciousness such as reflection, memory, and emotion (Harper 2002, 13).

3.3.6 Data Collection

I digitally recorded all interviews and wrote accompanying notes, which enabled me to compile a comprehensive portrait of the interview process, as well as allowing for natural conversation style (Dunn 2005, 95). Debates on the positive and negative aspects of data collection methods suggest that relying on note taking can impede the quality of the information gathered, due to the fact that note-takers can "miss important movements, expressions, and gestures of the informant [in addition to] undermin[ing] rapport and detract[ing] from active listening". In contrast, digital recorders are acknowledged to heighten the sense of vulnerability experienced by the participant, and in turn inhibit their responses (Dunn 2005, 95). In recognizing the difficultly associated with capturing the interview solely through note taking I chose, with the consent of my participants, to also use a small digital recorder. During sensitive points in the conversation, many participants would lower their voice or stop speaking and motion to turn off the recorder. When the recorder was turned off, and if approved by the participant, I would take notes during these parts of the conversation. All digital recordings and field notes collected from my fieldwork are kept in a locked filing cabinet and are only accessible by myself and Dr. Nolin.

3.3.7 Transcription

After the completion of data collection, I planned to fully transcribe all interviews so that I could increase my familiarity with the data (Cope 2005, 223) and ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of my respondents. However, due the extensive length and detail of each interview a full transcript was determined not to be beneficial. Instead, I partially transcribed all interviews, and included verbatim passage of the most pertinent information obtained during the conversation. Repetitive dialogue and tangential parts of the conversations was summarized within the transcript and provided with a time stamp.

If a participant indicated that she was interested in receiving an interview transcript, I mailed back copies for verification and/or the inclusion of additional information. Due to confidentiality concerns, some participants declined to have their transcript returned as they did not want their family to have immediate access to their information.

3.3.8 Coding & Analysis Techniques

Over the course of this thesis, I kept a field journal in which I recorded thematic hunches, questions and ideas, as well as observations from the field and the research process as a whole. In preparation for analysis, I spent considerable time reviewing this journal in order to examine the layers of experience which comprised the overall narrative gathered throughout this research. In doing so, I was able to produce a coding framework to inform my review and analysis of transcripts.

To begin analysis, I coded and grouped interview transcripts with the purpose of establishing an examination that is sensitive to individual situations, yet provided context to the range of issues impacting the settlement and integration experiences of foreign brides (Babbie 2004, 319). Cope (2005, 223) suggests the purpose of coding to centre on distilling, organizing, and analyzing data in order to assist in theory building. During the research analysis process, I implemented descriptive codes to categorize patterns within the data sets, in addition to analytic codes which reflected important themes and concepts expressed by participants. These methods enabled me to identify common themes, concepts, and underlying meanings embedded within the discourse (Babbie 2004, 319).

Fereday & Muir-Cocherane (2006, 4) indicate that an effective coding structure is one that captures the 'qualitative richness' of the practice being studied by "emphasiz[ing] multiple meanings and interpretations rather than seeking to impose and one 'dominant' or 'correct'

interpretation" (Winchester 2005, 6). Therefore, the analysis process requires great care and reflexivity on the part of the researcher, given that they ultimately hold the power and authority to interpret and report the results (Winchester 2005, 11). To ensure that I remained focused on the richness of experiences shared during interview conversations, I distilled my coding framework down to key words, themes, quotes, and ideas and transferred them onto color-coded sticky notes which I posted on a large wall in front of my workspace. This large visual reference served as a constant reminder of my thought process and enabled me to reconnect with, add, revise, and be reflexive every time I sat down to work.

After coding, I synthesized the data in attempts to answer the initial questions posed within the interviews, as well as the research questions of the thesis. In doing so, I became aware of the complex and highly interconnected nature of the data and how simply answering the research questions would not do justice to the narratives shared by the women. As such, I began to reconsider the data in order to locate higher order themes which would provide an effective framework for the delivery of individual and collective narratives. In considering the theoretical frameworks (transnationalism and feminism) and conceptual approaches (place, identity, and corporeality) used to frame this research, I decided to organize my subthemes by settings, working from the most intimate places of experience (marital relationships and family dynamics) to broader social and community contexts (perceptions of independence and agency, as well as cultural refueling opportunities[9]) that occur within and across transnational social space.

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[9] Cultural refueling opportunities refer to the ability to interact with people and/or familiar sights, sounds, smells, tastes of a transmigrants place of origin. In accessing these touchstones of culture, transmigrants are able to forge translocalities that simultaneously link their countries of origin and settlement, and which assist in the reestablishment of place and identity.

3.3.9 Analysis

Because this research study is focused on privileging the voices of foreign brides' transnational experiences, it was imperative to include direct quotations in order to contextualize and validate settlement and integration experiences shared by the women. The value of utilizing direct quotations is discussed by Madge et al., (1997, 107-108) when they identify that the inclusion of spoken word can strengthen the research product by "convey meaning which mere words on the paper cannot...the emotional content and tone of the response can tell us a considerable amount about feelings and interpretations". Therefore, in integrating participants' voices and silences as descriptive tools, I aim to empower the voices of my participants, while being critically reflexive of the inherent power dynamics surrounding the position of the researcher as the "anonymous voice of authority" (Madge et al., 1997, 107).

3.3.10 Analytical Framework

Given that there is no specific space or interaction through which sense of place and/or identity is negotiated, it is essential to recognize how an individual is positioned by the continuum of their experiences within localized scales of reference (Tuan 1977, 6; Tilley 1994, 19; Castree 2003, 174). For instance, many disciplines within the social sciences recognize the importance of spatial organization and argue that spaces become places when interaction and experiences occur within them (Tuan 1975, 151; Tilley 1994, 11-12). Correspondingly, actions and interactions facilitate the development of individual or collective meaning, boundary definition, and the formation of sense of place and identity (Rodman 1992, 642; Massey 1994, 48; McDowell 1997, 2; Lovell 1998, 1).

In recognizing that place meaning is localized, one can understand the development of place scales or a nested hierarchy of place attribution within spaces of individual experience (Tuan 1975, 153; Lewicka 2011, 211-12). Therefore, in building from the most intimate space of

experience and interaction, critical scholars recognize the body and the home as the most influential spaces, followed by neighborhoods, cities, regions, countries, and continents (Tuan 1975, 153; Lewicka 2011, 211-12). Employing this hierarchy as a rubric for analysis, I utilize scales of experience, as well as the politics of space, to examine to how the renegotiation of place and identity occurs at central points of negotiation: marital relationship (body/self), family dynamics (home), independency and agency (community), cultural refueling (transnational) (Figure 3.1.)
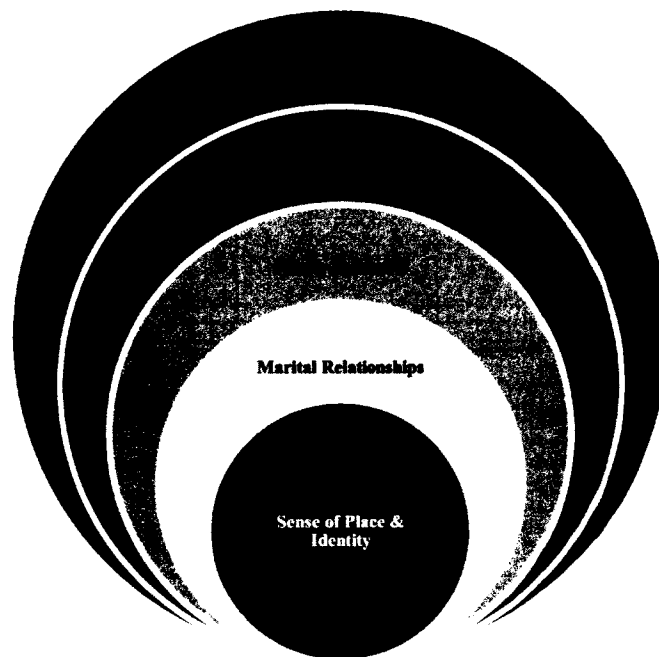
Figure 3.1: Hierarchy of Place Negotiation

Beginning at the first points of negotiation, body, self and relationships, analysis and discussion within Chapter Six contextualizes the development of the marital relationship by emphasizing individual motivations, methods of introduction, and the selection of spousal partners, as well as touching on gender ideologies and cultural (re)productions as influencing factors in the decision to marry and migrate. Additionally, Chapter Seven explores local and transnational landscapes in order to highlight the how foreign brides' experience of the physical, social, and cultural

landscapes in northern BC influence settlement and integration, and further, how cultural refueling opportunities shape their renegotiation of identity and place making skills.

3.3.11 Findings & Discussion

Given the breadth of my research questions, a singular response would not satisfy the specified research objective(s), nor would it enable exploration of the complexities and particularities of the marriage migration process. Therefore, rather than attempting to answer each research question individually, I explore the range of experiences shared by presenting the narratives of women grouped by four primary themes or points of negotiation: marital relationships, family dynamics, reestablishment of independence and agency, as well as cultural refueling opportunities and transnational connections. In touching on these points of negotiation, I am able to appreciate how experiences of inclusion and exclusion in new environments and across transnational social space (Nolin 2006, 148; Goldring & Krishnamurti 2007, 1) have shaped individual perceptions of mobility, and the (re)construction of identity and place making strategies.

Moreover, the presentation of research findings in this manner reflects the need to think and write differently in order to respectfully create space for the voices, perceptions, and lived experiences of the women who participated in this research (Haig-Brown 2003, 416; Nolin 2006; Abu-Lughod 1991). Additionally, approaching analysis and discussion in this manner enables the use of both transnational and feminist lenses, and aims to privilege the voice of participants throughout the exploration of their global-local experiences (Nolin 2006). While these four points of negotiation can in no way encompass the entirety of the experiences shared during interview conversations, they do provide the space and permeability necessary to appreciate the narratives shared by the foreign brides, as well as serve to highlight the interconnected and socially constructed realities that comprise their transnational everyday experiences.

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3.4 Conclusion

Drawing upon the above-mentioned methodologies and qualitative methods to describe and explore social practice (Babbie 2004, 293), this research explores transnational marriage migration and its effect on the negotiation of sense of place and identity of foreign brides who have settled in northern BC. Through the reflexive implementation of these research methods, this study aims to respectfully understand the individual experience of foreign brides in northern communities. Additionally, by gathering these lived experiences, this study has the potential to create enhanced wellness by indicating the common barriers faced by foreign brides with regard to place making strategies and the reconstruction of identity in rural, non-metropolitan settings. The integrity of my study will be embedded in the rigorous approaches that I adopt to ensure credibility and dependability of my results, in addition to my ability to be reflexive of all factors affecting my project as a whole.

Chapter 4 : Global-Local Dynamics and the Business of Transnational Marriage Migration

4.1 Introduction

Intercultural relationships, facilitated by the thriving marriage migration industry, are established with the intent of enabling a woman to internationally migrate for the purpose of marriage (Angeles & Sunanta 2007, 25). As such, marriage migration is a complex transnational phenomenon that is deeply embedded within global, local, and individual landscapes of negotiation (Constable 2003b, 163; Lauser 2008, 85). Primary actors in this process include the men and women who are seeking martial partners, as well as matchmaking agencies, introduction services, and international marriage brokers (Constable 2003b, 13). Catalyzing forces for entering into the marriage migration process include an extensive variety of impetuses and motivations, which cannot be understood simply as a matter of individual or familial choice (Cunneen & Stubbs 2008, 100). Langevin & Belleau (2000, 104-107), Belleau (2003b, 603-606), Constable (2003a, 163), Oxman-Martinez et al., (2005, 247) all acknowledge "existing and emerging cultural, social, historical and politico-economic factors" (Lauser 2008, 86) as primary influences motivating both men and women to engage in the marriage migration process.

While the vast majority of literature on the marriage migration industry tends to focus on public 'push' factors such as those aforementioned, Mai & King (2009, 296) advocate for a stronger exploration and understanding of private 'pulls', or emotional and sexual desires, as motivating factors in the decision to migrate. Therefore, rather than marginalizing the influence of love, sex, and emotion by situating social, political, and economic arguments at the fore, this chapter aims to recognize the intersection of all dynamics discussed within the breadth of relevant discourses on marriage migration. However, because there is such a wide range of potential reasons for engaging in such relationships, and accordingly, diverse outcomes of such

interactions, one is able to understand that literature surrounding this process fails to truly encompass the varied experiences of this type of migration (Piper & Roces, 2003, 3; Mix & Piper 2003, 56; Mai & King 2009, 295; Chun 1996, 1156; Kelly 2001, 179). In recognizing the diverse array of reasons that may or may not contribute to an individual's choice to participate in the marriage migration process, it is essential to understand the particular context that shapes such decisions by examining how power is situated, on an individual scale (Brining 2001, 321).

4.2 Historical Context: Immigration, Personal Desire, and Cultural Values

The roots of the modern marriage migration industry can be traced to historical immigration patterns and traditional marital customs, as well as attributed to assisting the settlement and development of North America (Chun 1996, 1155). The first settlers of the New World were predominantly male, given that extensive overseas travel and arduous frontier life were not perceived as activities well suited to women (Chun 1996, 1157-58; Del Vecchio 2007, 183). As a result of this trend, a severe demographic imbalance was created, which in turn, facilitated the necessity for foreign women to immigrate as partners for the first male settlers (Chun 1996, 1158; Del Rosario 2005, 258; Del Vecchio 2007, 183;). Following from cultural beliefs and customs, the immigration of women for the purpose of marriage was perceived to satisfy the physical and emotional desires of lonely male immigrants, while similarly maintaining the family structure in the new country of settlement (Chun 1996, 1159-60.)

The marriage migration process was initially facilitated by the family of the immigrant male in the same manner as arranged marriages, wherein letters and pictures of potential partners were exchanged until an agreement was reached (Chun 1996, 1158; Kabeer 2007, 36). Due to the growing demand for women in North America, introduction agencies were established to broker contact and communication between potential marital partners, resulting in the exponential

growth of this practice through the use of catalogues to market potential brides (Hughes 2004, 1; Kabeer 2007, 36). Initially, women participating in marriage migration were referred to as "picture brides" (Chun 1996, 1155; Del Vecchio 2007, 183), a term which connotes the historical roots of the practice; yet as introduction agencies evolved, the term 'mail order bride' was used to describe a woman advertised by an agency, company, or broker, from whom contact and communication services are purchased, for the purpose of marriage and migration.

4.2.1 Situating Individual Particularity through the Use of Neutral Terminology

Contemporarily, the term 'mail order bride' is understood to be offensive, degrading, and derogatory (Constable 2003b, 2; Mix & Piper 2003, 55), as it uniformly "promotes the unfortunate connotation that women are commodities, who are bought by male consumers" (Constable 2005b, 168). Furthermore, Constable (2003b, 29) argues the term 'mail order bride' to be "flawed and misleading", because it homogenizes the individual particularity of the brides' experiences into a pattern of domination by "predefine[ing] women as victims and prematurely foreclose[ing] on the possibility of their being otherwise". Consequently, in recognizing that there may be a wide range of experiences, including both positive and negative relationships encountered within this research study, I am choosing to utilize the more equitable term 'foreign bride' to describe women who are involved in the marriage migration relationship.

4.3 Contemporary Process: Love, Sex(ism), and Globalization

With the equalization of population demographics in North America, the demand for foreign brides decreased and the marriage migration industry declined, but remained marginally active (Chun 1996, 1159). In the 1970's, the marriage migration industry began to flourish once again due to the arrival of the Women's Movement, as western men began to look overseas for more 'traditional' wives (Chun 1996, 1159; Del Vecchio 2007, 184). During this time, catalogues and pen pal communication remained the primary medium through which the

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marriage migration process was facilitated (Constable 2007, 255; Robinson 2007, 485; Kojima 2001, 199). With the mainstream introduction of Internet in the early 1990's, in conjunction with the restriction of localized 'mail order bride' agencies in some countries (Samarasinghe 2009, 170), the marriage migration industry transitioned to incorporate use of new information technologies such as the Internet[10] (Belleau 2003b, 595; Cunneen & Stubbs 2003, 76; Angeles & Sunanta 2007, 3; Constable 2007, 254; Cabrera 2007, 52). Subscriptions to print catalogues are still available; however, given the increased availability of interactions on the Internet, the majority of contemporary relationships are now created via online websites (Brinig 2001, 323). Although similarities do exist between historical notions of "picture brides" and the current marriage migration process, Constable (2005a, 12) and Del Vecchio (2007, 184) argue the contemporary process to have changed both qualitatively and quantitatively, given that the new practice has a "different structure, different focus, and different consequences" (Chun 1996, 1159).

In recent years, migration scholars have brought to light the impact that technology and globalization have had on many aspects of contemporary life; however, the connections between love and globalization have yet to be extensively explored (Mai & King 2009, 295; Constable 2007, 252; Fairer 2007, 149). New spheres of interaction, in the form of online dating websites, matchmaking agencies, and introduction services, have flourished since the advent of the Internet and as such, have significantly altered the mechanics of marriage, love, sex, and romance (Belleau 2003b, 595; Angeles & Sunanta 2007, 3; Constable 2007, 254; Cabrera 2007,

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[10] Throughout my literature review, the role of the internet and technology was repeatedly highlighted as a key component within the development of the contemporary marriage-scape, representations/ commodification of women, as well as the perpetuation of cultural fantasies and gendered imaginings of females and males participating in marriage migration relationships. While the majority of my participants did meet their partner utilizing online introduction services, the women's narratives did not highlight the internet and other technologies as key elements within their introduction experiences and/or spousal selection processes.

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52; Faier 2007, 149). Once thought to be a very personal, private, and ultimately localized experience, the boundaries of love and intimacy have expanded to become a global "marriage-scape" via online communication tools (Constable 2007, 252-254).

4.3.1 Matchmaking Agencies, Introduction Services, and International Marriage Brokers

Given that this digital landscape is accessible by almost every person, in every country, online introduction agencies are currently recognized as the most effective method for marketing potential marital partners within "the twentieth-century mail order bride business" (Angeles & Sunanta 2007, 4; Kelly 2001, 177). Similarly to traditional catalogues, virtual profiles identify basic characteristics about the potential partners, such as their name, age, weight, and other attributes of their physical appearance, as well as a brief description of their area of origin, interests, and hobbies (Chun 1996, 1155; Brookes 2007, 22; Del Vecchio 2007, 186; Kelly 2001, 178). Yet, contemporary "virtual catalogues" (Angeles & Sunanta 2007, 4) are considered a higher quality medium of representation because they allow the interested customer to explore with greater ease and accessibility (Pehar 2003, 171; Angeles & Sunanta 2007, 22). Moreover, use of the Internet facilitates the fastest and most convenient way to engage in real time communication, via email, chat rooms, virtual phone calls (Angeles & Sunanta 2007, 24; Cabrera 2007, 55; Chun 1996, 1163; Del Vecchio 2007, 186). However, Brookes (2007, 21) identifies that due to the ever increasing level of e-mail monitoring, that letter writing has returned to be the favorite method of communication between interested participants, because it is more personal and cannot be traced. Moreover, Del Vecchio (2007, 186) speaks to the unregulated nature of online introduction services, who generally impose superficial selection measures on prospective brides with regard to their physical appearance, but require no screening processes for consumers. Often websites promoting introduction services also alternative links

which market erotica, sex tourism, prostitution, and in some cases, child pornography (Cunneen & Stubbs 2003, 76-77). With no formal measures in place to monitor the types of consumers participating in the industry (Kelly 2001, 179), the marriage migration process exposes vulnerable women to potentially dangerous individuals (Cunneen & Stubbs 2003, 71).

In purchasing a subscription to an online introduction service, consumers are able to access a greater quantity and diversity of advertisements, as well as view photographs, utilize online communication tools, order contact addresses, access translation services, and retrieve 'how to' guides on letter writing and fiancé visa applications (Angeles & Sunanta 2007, 22-23; Chun 1996, 1163). Sophisticated introduction agency websites include the capacity to sort and compare individuals based on their personal characteristics, as well as offering romance tour packages, complete with transportation, accommodation, guided recreation and interpreter services, in order to facilitate one-on-one meetings with potential brides (Angeles & Sunanta 2007, 23; Chun 1996, 1163; Del Vecchio 2007, 186; Cunneen & Stubbs 2003, 78; Kelly 2001, 178). Similarly to most online shopping venues, interested customers can "add to cart" desired advertisements, as well as "update their cart" when making final selections and purchases (Angeles & Sunanta 2007, 22-23; Cunneen & Stubbs 2003, 78). To purchase the contact information of a potential bride, prices range from as little as $0.30 to $10.00 per woman, with some sites offering discounts for "bulk" purchases (Cunneen & Stubbs 2003, 78). Depending on the type of introduction agency and communication services utilized, Chun (1996, 1166) estimates that a potential husband will "spend anywhere from $3,000 to $10,000 to buy a wife" (Kelly 2001, 178). Thus, due to the fact that consumers can assess, evaluate, and purchase contact with potential brides, Belleau (2003b, 596), Basu (2005, 226), Angeles & Sunanta (2007, 22), Brookes (2007, 16) Samarasinghe (2009, 168) all argue that virtual catalogues present

women as marketable objects or commodities.

The profitable nature of the marriage migration industry can also be attributed to the proliferation of online matchmaking and introduction services, as websites are inexpensive to operate, easy to update and operate, and inadequately regulated (Chun 1996, 1165; Pehar 2003, 171; Angeles & Sunanta 2007, 4; Del Vecchio 2007, 181-186; Hughes 2004, 1). Moreover, virtual subscriptions enable increased confidentiality for both advertisers and consumers, as well as a cheaper and easier method of payment (Del Vecchio 2007, 181; Hughes 2004, 1). As such, the growth of the marriage migration industry has increased exponentially in recent decades; yet because there are no formal measures in place to officially document the marriage migration process, a definitive figure regarding the rate of occurrence is unknown (Brinig 2001, 321; Del Vecchio 2007, 179). In 1998, 153 international agencies were documented to be in service (Scholes 1999); by 2000, this number had increased by 130% to total 350 websites (Constable 2007, 255). In 2007, more than 200 websites were known to exist in the United States, profiting more than $2 million (USD) a year (Angeles & Sunanta 2007, 4). Pehar (2001, 171) and Angeles & Sunanta (2007, 4) estimate that between 100,000 and 150,000 women are formally advertising themselves for marriage on these websites; however, given that marriage migration is a growing industry and that these statistics are not current, the actual frequency of this process is grossly underestimated. Although it is not precise, a simple Google search corroborates this notion (Del Vecchio 2007, 185), as querying the term 'mail order bride' returns 18,600,000 results in 0.19 seconds (Google 2013).

Although many researchers are quick to link the Internet to the marginalization and commodification of women, Cabrera (2007, 54) comments that the Internet is in the same way a tool to mediate women's choice and agency, as well as promote assistance to those negatively

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affected by the practice (Del Rosario 2005, 270). Del Rosario (2005, 270) corroborates this notion by suggesting that the Internet provides individuals with greater control and autonomy, given that they may sustain or terminate an interaction at any time.

4.3.2 Stereotypes and Generalizations

Traditionally and contemporarily, patterns of marriage migration relationships have paralleled the dominant flow of capital between countries of the Global North and counties of the Global South, given the "historical, colonial, and post-colonial" ties that influence these economic relationships (Constable 2005, 4-5). Scholarly literature corroborates this notion by describing intermarriage websites to primarily promote unions between "Third World" or "Oriental women" and "First World "or "Western men" (Kojima 2001, 199; Belleau 2003a, 94; Constable 2005, 2; Cabrera 2007, 55; Chun 1996, 1155; Cunneen & Stubbs 2003, 79); however, demographic trends can only be presumed due to the fact that there are no formal measures in place to qualitatively or quantitatively track the process (Angeles & Sunanta 2007, 9; Belleau 2003a, 94; Chun 1996, 1156). Therefore, contemporary research on the topic of marriage migration rarely moves beyond geographical generalizations, such as identifying South Asian countries, followed by countries within Eastern Europe and South America, as the primary origin of foreign brides (Chun 1996, 1160-61; Basu 2005, 228).

Similarly to geographical generalizations, literature discussing the marriage migration process utilizes binary stereotypes to characterize both males and females involved in the process, with negative experiences, representations, and connotations occupying the vast majority of literature (Piper & Roces 2003, 8-9; Constable 2007, 253). Criticism for such generalizations identify that the marriage migration process is often overly stereotyped by "simplistic images and characterizations", instead of taking into account the actual experiences,

choices and desires that shape participants' interactions (Constable 2007, 254; Brining 2001, 321). Taking into account this notion, the following section of this chapter is intended to illustrate the range of factors which can contribute to an individual's desire to participate in the marriage migration process.

4.3.3 Rationales for Marriage Migration

The promise of love on an international scale is a primary motivator for many people to participate in the marriage migration process. Similarly, unhappiness with the dating scene in their home country, coupled with frustrating and unsuccessful courtship experiences are often attributed to the desire to search for a new type of relationship by way of online introduction services (Constable 2007, 254; Chun 1996, 1175; Kabeer 2007, 37). By exposing interested individuals to new information, interactions, and opportunities, the Internet enables one to transverse their local marriage constraints and engage in new social realities (Constable 2007, 254). Belleau (2003a, 595) acknowledges "the growing solitude of adults who have gone through difficult relationships, separations, and divorces- coupled with the difficulty of meeting compatible, available people" in their country of origin as common factors influencing decisions to seek love via online matchmaking agencies (Constable 2003b, 13; Chun 1996, 1168). Thus, given that new information and communication technologies facilitate "fluid interconnections between people, technology, and images that allow women and men from geographically distant regions of the world to imagine and seek out new global experiences and relationships" (Constable 2007, 254), one is able to understand an individual's desire for alternatives to their local marriage market.

Although operators of online introduction services argue that their websites facilitate the potential for loving relationships between consensual partners, critics of the process recognize

the industry promote subordination based on "race", gender, and class, as well as transnational economic inequalities via a profitable commercial market (Chun 1996, 1160-1169; Belleau 2003b, 603; Del Rosario 2005, 268). Constable (2005, 7) corroborates this notion by arguing that relationships created by matchmaking agencies and/or introduction services to both reflect, and are propelled by "fantasies and imaginings about gender, sexuality, tradition, and modernity" which involve symbolization and desire of both individuals involved (Robinson 2007, 486). Thus, in discussing the business of cultural reproduction that surrounds the marriage migration industry, one must consider the construction of certain forms of masculinity and femininity, in conjunction with the intent upon which these stereotypes are founded, in order to understand certain rationales that serve as motivations to participate in the process (Cunneen & Stubbs 2003, 69).

Following from this notion, cultural reproductions and imaginings of both eastern and western cultures can be attributed to facilitating marriage migration relationships. For instance, Men who seek the services of an introduction agency in their search for a bride are described to generally reside in wealthy western countries such as the United States, Canada, and Australia, are typically "economically and professionally successful" (Del Vecchio 2007, 184), but whom are ineffective within their local marriage market (Constable 2007, 255; Kabeer 2007, 39). Chun (1996, 1168) corroborates this notion by stating that consumer husbands generally earn an annual income of $20,000 or more in blue collar to upper middle class professions, are college graduates, and whom have experienced a significant breakup or divorce (Cunneen & Stubbs 2003, 71). Occasionally, the limited success of these men in local dating markets is ascribed to inadequate social skills (Constable 2007, 255) or age (Chun 1996, 1168; Cunneen & Stubbs 2003, 70), but is most often attributed to sexism regarding supposed qualities of foreign women

in comparison to western women, who are sometimes believed to be "too liberated, demanding, or independent in their outlook" (Robinson 1996, 55; Kojima 2001, 200; Belleau 2003a, 96; Angeles & Sunanta 2007, 26; Cabrera 2007, 54; Del Vecchio 2007, 184).

In this context, men motivated by anti-feminist sentiments presume that foreign women are submissive and eager to please and thus seek transnational relationships to secure an obedient wife, maid, and sex partner (Belleau 2003b, 596; Cunneen & Stubbs 2003, 81; Brookes 2007, 17; Cabrera 2007, 54; Del Vecchio 2007, 184). In rejecting potential marital partners in his country of origin because they are perceived as too aggressive, egotistical, and ambitious or because they may "make excessive demands in marriage, and have expectations of equality with their husbands," Belleau (2003b, 596) asserts that the husband's control and domination of their partner is their primary motivation in the marriage (Constable 2005, 7; Robinson 2007, 486; Del Vecchio 2007, 184). These sexist notions are perpetuated on introduction agency websites by way of the ethnic and gender stereotypes implemented to entice potential consumers (Angeles & Sunanta 2007, 25; Del Vecchio 2007, 184). Brookes (2007, 18) corroborates this notion by discussing how online introduction sites utilize patriarchal sentiments and nostalgia to construct foreign women as: "the substitute for what first world men have lost in the emancipation of first world women: traditional, family-oriented, feminine (read: non-feminist) wives" (Angeles & Sunanta 2007, 25). This notion is specifically contextualized by quotation utilized by Del Vecchio (2007, 185) taken from an online introduction agency, which states:

> American women are thought not content to be wives and mothers but instead seek personal satisfaction through their own careers and interests, while the foreign woman is happy to be the homemaker and asks for nothing more than [a] husband, home and family.

When observing "virtual catalogues" one is unable to ignore the gendered and ethnic stereotypes that are implemented as the predominant mode of marketing potential brides (Belleau

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2003a, 595; Cunneen & Stubbs 2003, 72; Chan 1988, 33). Representations of women on online introduction services utilize a diverse range of images, some which are very subtle and friendly, whereas others are overtly sexual and explicit (Brinig 2001, 321). Both Chun (1996, 1162) and Brookes (2007, 22) describe introduction sites to advertise women similarly to a department store's listing of merchandise, so that "men can pick them out by the color and size they desire, as if they were choosing a shirt to buy" (Basa 2005, 228). Regardless of the nature of the advertisement, Belleau (2003b, 596), Cunneen & Stubbs (2003, 75), Basu (2005, 226), Angeles & Sunanta (2007, 21), Brookes (2007, 16), Del Vecchio (2007, 186), and Samarasinghe (2009, 168) all argue that online introduction agencies perpetuate gender based exploitation by commodifying women based on their gender identities, as well as propagate unequal power relations on the basis of "race", ethnicity, and class. In emphasizing the exotic background of women, their sexual availability, and the poverty of their countries of origin, introduction agencies construct stereotypical identities which function to legitimize oppressive practices and authorize domination and control.

The branding of online introduction agencies easily corroborate this statement, as most popular websites names feature physical, ethnic, and/or sexist descriptors[11]. The use of generalizations based on ethnicity and nationality within advertisements perpetuates the mystique of fantasy and desires for 'otherness' (Chun 1996, 1180). Cunneen & Stubbs (2003, 73) discuss how radicalized and gendered representations are used to structure male desire within advertisements of potential brides in stating that: "the body is a site of shifting historical and cultural inscriptions of power and knowledge, and the bodies of Asian women are inscribed with characteristics which position them within a particular post-colonial context." Following

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[11] For more information, please see: http://www.anastasiadate.com; http://www.elenasmodels.com; http://www.russian cupid.com; http://www.goodwife.com; http://www.cherryblossoms.com; http:// www.thai-the-knot.com

from this notion, Brookes (2007, 16) claims that advertisements of potential brides reflect an imperialistic paradigm in which the exotic female 'other' can be colonized by the patriarchal male gaze (Cabrera 2007, 54; Chan 1988, 34). Scholars also identify "American military sexual colonialism" (Chun 1996, 1179) due to the interweaving of colonial and military domination with sexual domination during overseas service, as well as sex tourism, and the adult entertainment industry as an underlying reason for the overtly sexualized perception of Asian women (Chan 1988, 34; Angeles & Sunanta 2007, 10; Cunneen & Stubbs 2008, 101). Furthermore, Brookes (2007, 18) points to sexist constructions of women as passive, fragile, submissive, and docile beings as a functional rationale for the fulfillment of historical tropes which suggest that women need to be rescued (Cunneen & Stubbs 2003, 74). Yet, Chun (1996, 1186) identifies that women who choose to advertise themselves for marriage are generally those whom are seeking control over their life and have decided to express their agency in new and different ways. Although the majority of literature identifies potential brides as disempowered second class citizens, Brookes (2007, 22) suggests that a good proportion women who advertise themselves for marriage are "between the ages of 21-45, usually college educated, fluent in a foreign language with limited English, and [have] no dependents" (Kabeer 2007, 40).

Similarly to men who seek a specific type of bride based upon assumed gender constructions, some women pursue marriage migration based on ideologies of social mobility, masculinity, and enhanced quality of life in western countries (Belleau 2003b, 595; Mix & Piper 2003, 56; Constable 2005, 2; Lauser 2008, 102; Del Rosario 2005, 255; Cabrera 2007, 54; Del Vecchio 2007, 189). Brookes (2007, 16) describes how powerful and coercive images of western countries perpetuated by newspapers, magazines, and film to idyllically exemplify the first world countries as the highest embodiment health, wealth, and prosperity, as well as superior centres of

learning and civilization (Kabeer 2007, 36; Del Rosario 2005, 260). Belleau (2003b, 596), Del Rossario (2005, 262), Del Vecchio (2007, 189), and Kabeer (2007, 40) corroborate this notion by affirming that potential brides can be motivated by gendered imaginings of foreign men, with the ideal archetype consisting of: "the Hollywood star variety: a good, respectful, faithful, and loving husband" (Chun 1996, 1175). Del Rosario (2005, 263) comments that marriage migration is often an inevitable, if the not preferred method of seeking a partner for women who have postponed early marriage in favour of a career, given that their education and professional status may detract from their desirability in local marriage markets. Subsequently, the opportunity for foreign brides to explore other cultures and experiences, sometimes referred to as the "bright lights theory", serves as a primary impetus to seek a relationship through international introduction services (Del Rosario 2005, 255; Angeles & Sunanta 2007, 6).

In contrast to the depiction of foreign brides as vulnerable victims of the exploitative marriage migration industry, scholarly literature also identifies the portrayal of brides as predatory manipulators (Cunneen & Stubbs 2003, 74; Constable 2007, 253). Characterizations of this stereotype suggest that foreign brides are sexually promiscuous, self-seeking, 'gold-diggers' who only marry western men in order to immigrate and secure citizenship in a new country (Cunneen & Stubbs 2003, 84; Kelly 2001, 182). Furthermore, by constructing men as the victim in this marriage migration scenario, Cunneen & Stubbs (2003, 84) assert that popular media portrays foreign brides "at best, as complicit in the violence against them or, at worst, the cause of the violence."

The alleged inferiority of men in the perspective bride's country of origin is also indicated as an underlying motivation for participation in the marriage migration industry (Cunneen & Stubbs 2003, 82; Del Rosario 2005, 261). This attraction may be linked to the

perceived modern qualities and perspectives of western men, as well as to their power and appearance (Constable 2005, 7) but can also be attributed to "harsh domestic realties that cultivate high rates of alcoholism and condone domestic violence" in third world countries (Del Vecchio 2007, 189). Moreover, in marrying a western man a bride can achieve significant upward mobility, as Del Rosario (2005, 261) explains that:

> Marriage to a white man, particularly an American man, is considered an 'improvement' over marrying a local, regardless of his social class affiliation. Of course, a rise in status is 'doubled' if the white man is also known to be wealthy [...] marriage to a white 'man of letters' (doctor/lawyer/professor/novelist/engineer/etc.) would immediately quadruple the migrant Filipina bride's social status.

Further cultural reproductions of first world countries include the notion that Westerners are "socially and genetically" superior (Del Rosario 2005, 261). In marrying a Caucasian man, potential brides may consider the notion that that "mixed offspring [are] physically more attractive, carrying on the best features of both parents", as well as being linguistically and culturally diverse, and thus more modern and cosmopolitan (Del Rosario 2005, 261).

Discourses regarding the influence of cultural reproductions as impetuses for marriage migrations are attributed by Constable (2007, 253) to often be based on sensationalized media images "of a failed or abusive relationships that may have caught the eye of activists and popular media", and further, serve to perpetuate the simplistic labeling of foreign brides as "either innocent victims of trafficking or as hyper-agents who are desperate to come to the West" (Constable 2007, 253). However, the influence of gender ideologies, and essentialized notions of ethnicity can be understood to construct contradictory and unrealistic expectations within the marriage, given the underlying paradox of a man seeking a traditional wife, who is searching for a modern husband which may form the basis for divorce, violence, and abuse (Chun 1996, 1776; Tolentino 1996, 51; Langevin & Belleau 2000, 85-89; Philippine Women Center of BC 2000, 5;

Kojima 2001, 200; Pehar 2003, 171; Robinson 2007, 484; Lauser 2008, 86; Cabrera 2007, 55; Del Vecchio 2007, 189; Lauser 2008, 88;).

A bride's potential ability to acquire greater stability for themselves and their families is an additional gendered and/ or cultural aspect motivating the creation of marriage migration relationships (Belleau 2003b, 95; Constable 2003b, 167; Lauser 2008, 102; Chun 1996, 1171). Belleau (2003b, 95) suggests systemic sexism within Third World counties to be primarily based on the notion that "women are considered to have less value than men"; therefore, because "boys remain the hope of the family" (Belleau 2003b, 604), girls are marginalized by cultural and legal customs that deprive them of equitable access to education, employment, credit opportunities, inheritance, and property rights (Del Rosario 2005, 255; Angeles & Sunanta 2007, 8). Given that women generally occupy marginal positions within the family, community, and society as a whole, Angeles & Sunanta (2007, 7) describe that migration enables the possibility to contest their disempowered standing and identity, in addition to securing greater financial stability for themselves and their families (Belleau 2003b, 606; Del Rosario 2005, 266). Given this treatment of women as "second class citizens", Belleau (2003a, 95) illustrates how the marriage migration industry takes advantage of their social, cultural, and economic marginalization by "painting an enticing picture of a better future in the First World". Chun (1996, 1160) corroborates this notion by identifying that bridal agencies use newspaper and magazine advertisements to recruit women from economically disempowered countries in order to capitalize upon their poverty and vulnerable status (Del Vecchio 2007, 186). Thus, because the ability to flourish in their country of origin is constrained by both structural and social barriers, women are motivated to engage in this process in order to seek stability, opportunity, and new experiences (Langevin & Belleau 2000, 105; Pessar & Mahler 2003, 819; Chun 1996, 1170-71).

The economic contribution of foreign brides is further discussed by Kojima (2001, 204-205), who suggests that foreign brides occupy the position of "migrant reproductive workers", due to the fact that they "fill a gap" in the domestic sphere produced by western "women's resistance" to traditional roles; thereby creating the process of marriage migration as "an instrument of economic activity [because] their remittances are regarded as a new form of capital accumulation". By financially supporting her family through the transnational exchange of remittances, Lauser (2008, 102) describes the marriage migration process as form of "bargain[ing]" that the woman must negotiate, as she is required to weigh the cost between the interchange of "monetary value and the moral and emotional value associated with their multiple roles....[in an] unpaid labour of love". Additionally, by sending remittances home to their family, migrant women are not only financially supporting their relatives, but can potentially can also gain increased status and power for themselves and their family through this exchange (Pessar & Mahler 2003, 822).

In negotiating social and economic constraints through the pursuit of the marriage migration industry, some women are instead lured, coerced, or forced into the commercial sex sector (Samarasinghe 2009, 170). Arguments surrounding marriage migrations connection to the sex industry and human trafficking are contested within academic literature; while some scholars argue that the international marriage market has become a conduit for trafficking for the purpose of sex work (Angeles & Sunanta 2007, 10; Samarasinghe 2009, 169), others assert that marriage migration is just a mainstream form of trafficking, as women's bodies are perceived as commodities which can be bought and sold on introduction websites (Belleau 2003b, 596; Basu 2005, 226; Brookes 2007, 16; Del Vecchio 2007, 186; Samarasinghe 2009, 168; Cunneen & Stubbs 2003, 75). Regardless of which argument scholars choose to support, the potential

connection to violence, enslavement, and exploitation is never negated. Given that introduction agencies facilitate increased accessibility to women, transnational crime networks have begun to utilize these services as fronts for their trafficking operations (Angeles & Sunanta 2007, 10). Angeles & Sunanta (2007, 10) state that approximately 500, 000 women are misled, coerced, or abducted by traffickers in Western European countries every year, yet due to the clandestine nature of trafficking, the frequency of trade cannot be formally tracked (Samarasinghe 2009, 167).

In discussing why national policies against human trafficking are purposefully ineffective Samarasinghe (2009, 167) sheds light on structural inequalities that similarly frame the marriage migration industry (Cunneen & Stubbs 2008, 100). Given that development policies of third world countries are primarily focused on increasing foreign exchange earnings and facilitating debt repayment, national policies, in conjunction with underlying social and cultural norms, can foster female migration and exploitation for the purpose of foreign exchange and revenue (Samarasinghe 2009, 167; Belleau 2003b, 606; Cunneen & Stubbs 2008, 100). Cunneen & Stubbs (2008, 100) assert that structural adjustment policies and the deregulation of trade to have further marginalized the position of women by reinforcing "an international order in which women from developing countries are themselves 'traded' as workers, or wives". As such, policies concerning the migration of female workers for domestic care or reproductive labour tend to support the interests of the nation rather than the citizen (Cunneen & Stubbs 2008, 100). Heng (1997, 32) succinctly corroborates this notion in stating that: "the state, at its most benign, is a fiscal beneficiary of the exploitation of women, and at its least benign, an active agent structuring the exploitation itself." Thus, in 'selling' their care as unpaid housewives and domestic partners, foreign brides from are considered 'heroines' third world economies (Chun

1996, 1172).

4.4 Marriage Migration in Canada: Sponsorship, Dependency, and Vulnerability

The migration of foreign brides to Canada falls within the family class category of Canadian sponsorship policy, which specifies that any Canadian citizen or permanent resident of Canada is able to apply to sponsor a spouse, common law partner, conjugal partner, dependent child, and/or other eligible relatives to become permanent residents (CIC 2007). Within the application process, potential sponsors and their spouse must both consent to a sponsorship agreement, which stipulates that the sponsor be accountable for the sponsored spouse's needs for a minimum of three years (CIC 2007). During this term, the sponsored spouse is restricted from accessing all government sponsored financial or social assistance programs and all forms of health services, unless privately billed to the sponsor or the bride is able to prove abuse or neglect in the marital relationship (Cotè et al., 2001, 1-3; Smith 2006, 2; Merali 2009, 2). By eliminating access to these essential services, through the privatization of the sponsor person's basic needs, scholars argue that a "legal bondage of dependency is created" (Smith 2006, 2; Del Vecchio 2007, 1940).

Langevin & Belleau (2000), Rossiter (2005, 501), and Cotè et al., (2001, 1-3) identify the spousal sponsorship process to engender or intensify notions of dependency within the marital relationship, which can result in an inequitable power balance, exploitation, and abuse. By undermining the sponsored spouse's power and agency in the relationship, the spousal sponsorship agreement creates opportunities for immigration abuse, such as the concealment or non-filing of immigration papers, threats of deportation, and perceptions of "sponsorship debt" (Smith 2006, 6; Merali 2008, 282; Merali 2009, 3). Merali (2009, 3) defines "sponsorship debt" as the behaviour pattern where the sponsor and/or their family emphasize that the sponsored

spouse is indebted to them for facilitating their immigration, and thus the must repay this debt by satisfying certain demands or risk being deported. Typically, demands to include "certain household chores, giving up earned income to the sponsor or his family, not interacting with anybody outside of the family or cultural community, and tolerating various forms of abuse" (Merali 2009, 3). Sadly, Merali (2009, 3) notes that sponsored persons generally perceive "sponsorship debt" as something that they are unable to repay and unable to confront or escape the exploitation.

During the process of migration, one is required to leave behind their established familiarities and culture, as well as the socioeconomic systems of their home country and transition into a complete different environment (Abraham 2000, 221). As such, the process of migration can profoundly affect sense of being, way of life, and connections to understanding, given that individual conceptualizations of place and identity are understood to be positioned within specific localities and/or shared consciousness (Massey 1994, 7; Stedman 2002, 563); thus, the dislocation from frameworks of reference can be difficult, distressing, and tremendously transformative for new migrants (Silvey 2004, 498; Sengun 2001, 70; Walsh et al., 2008, 372). Regardless of the purpose of migration, scholars acknowledge the uncertainty and potential vulnerability associated with the experience of migration; however, research on the settlement and integration of female migrants, especially those who migrate as sponsored spouses, indentifies strong connections between the spousal sponsorship process and new migrant vulnerability, social isolation, and domestic violence (Chun 1996, 1185; Del Vecchio 2007, 194).

Unlike the historical migration of 'picture brides' to vibrant immigrant communities to meet a spouse of similar ethnicity, contemporary foreign brides generally migrate to marry

spouses from a different "race", culture, and customs, in addition to being involved in a relationship that was potentially created on economic, racial, gender, sexual, and cultural stereotypes (Chun 1996, 1185; Del Vecchio 2007, 194). Without the familial and the cultural supports generally available in one's home country, Abraham (2000, 222) identifies that new female immigrants struggle to obtain the existence, or continuance, of satisfactory social engagement and interaction, which can result in social isolation and a deep sense of loneliness (Chun 1996, 1183). Furthermore, given that the bride may not be proficient in either of Canada's official languages, her vulnerability is substantially increased, as she may lack awareness regarding her rights, status as a sponsored person, or any methods to access assistance (Cotè et al., 2001, 3; Smith 2006, 6; Merali 2009, 3-4; Del Vecchio 2007, 189). By imposing both linguistic and cultural barriers, the power differential created by the marriage migration process forces the bride to occupy a position where she is economically, socially, and psychologically dependent on her new spouse (Del Vecchio 2007, 194).

4.5 Conclusion

The preceding literature review on marriage migration was intended to establish a contextual framework of understanding for the diverse and complex realities of individuals involved in the marriage migration process. In taking into account the breadth of individual, familial, and structural motivations that form the basis for the marriage migration industry, one can recognize how deeply embedded the process is within global economic disparities, sexist ideologies, colonialism, and globalization (Angeles & Sunanta 2007, 24). Yet, Constable (2003, 177) urges researchers of the marriage migration practice to utilize an even broader perspective when examining process by stating that:

Such marriages, [...] should not be read as simple unidirectional movement from East to West (or South to North) oppressed to liberated, traditional to modern, local to global, [...] such dichotomies obscure more complex and intertwined circuitries. [...] Rather, [marriage migration] involves new subjectivities, new forms of power, new oppressions, and also new possibilities.

Moreover, Piper and Roces (2003, 8-9) and Constable (2003b, 30) assert that foreign brides should be regarded as exercising agency, given that demonstrate degrees of "power, creativity, and imagination" while choosing to marry, migrate, obtain certain lifestyles, and expand their opportunities (Angeles & Sunanta 2007, 4). Constable (2003b, 30) states:

To say that women express agency- they make choices and negotiate their situations- is not to romanticize or ignore the structural and ideological factors that constrain their choices [...] I argue that women involved in correspondence relationships are not merely pawns of global political economy or the victims of sexual imperialism [...] I aim to convey some of the complex and subtle ways in which personal experiences and life trajectories articulate with historical factors, political economy, and global imaginaries to produce (and sometimes deter) relationships.

Furthermore, Piper and Roces (2003, 8-9) assert that because there is no universal interpretation of agency across cultures, that individual experiences need to be contextualized and specifically linked to place and location in order to uncover "to what extent [foreign brides] are victims and agents". I agree with the aforementioned argument made by Constable (2003b & 2005) and Piper and Roces (2003) that foreign brides should be perceived as active agents in the marriage migration relationship, while similarly acknowledging the need to understand how individual agency is shaped by "gendered geographies of power" (Mahler & Pessar 2001, 447). In light of these arguments, I aim to resist a homogenizing gaze by highlighting power, voice, agency, and representation to argue that research on the topic of marriage migration should more inclusively address the diverse needs and interests of foreign brides, as well as the social and cultural groups they come from, in order to understand their individual and particular experiences of marriage migration (Constable 2003b, 27-29).

Chapter 5 : Contextualizing Arrival, Settlement, and Integration in Northern BC: An Exploration of Social, Cultural, and Political Landscapes

> Our human landscape is our unwitting autobiography, reflecting our tastes, our values, our aspirations, and even our fears, in tangible, visible form. We rarely think of the landscape that way and so the cultural record we have "written" in the landscape is liable to be more truthful than most autobiographies because we are less self-conscious about how we describe ourselves [...] All of our cultural warts and blemishes are there, and our glories too; but overall, our day-to-day qualities are exhibited for anyone who wants to find them and knows how to look for them. (Lewis 1979, 1)

5.1 Introduction

Culture is the product of particular discourses, accumulated through experience and embedded within the landscape, which serve to produce individual and collective identities (Platt 1996, 112). As noted by Lewis (1979, 1) cultural landscapes contain information about shared understandings of the world, as well as notions of place and the people which created them (Layton & Ucko 1999, 2; Smith 2005, 189). In exploring the sedimented composition of a cultural landscape, one is able to appreciate the complex, multi-scaled connections which link an individual's experiences and perceptions to their ontological and epistemological understandings (Smith 2005, 189).

Using historical review as a cognitive map of "the kind of people we are, and were, and are in process of becoming" (Lewis 1979, 3), one is able to tease out locational particularities in order to 'read' and understand the successive development of a cultural landscape (Downs & Stea 1977, 6). As such, the intent of this chapter is to situate the context for foreign brides' experiences within social, cultural, and political landscapes in resource dependent communities within northern BC, by exploring the interwoven connections between the province's distinct topography, economic development, patterns of immigration and settlement, and immigration policy.

In order to accurately address these objectives, this chapter is divided into two sections: historical context and contemporary landscapes. Beginning with a brief overview of physiographic characteristics to set the scene, section one focuses on exploring how immigrant arrival and settlement within BC has been shaped by the development of the resource economy, as well as by the evolution of Canadian immigration policy. To contextualize the contemporary landscape, the second section begins with an overview of current immigration policy in relation to the study topic, as well as offers community profiles on each of the study locations (Prince George, Fort St. John, and Dawson Creek). By structuring the chapter in this manner, I am able to highlight the distinct locational characteristics which influence the negotiation of place and identity of foreign brides residing in northern BC, as well as highlight how the evolution of Canadian immigration policy has created increased opportunities for vulnerability, dependency, and abuse within marriage migration relationships.

Section One: Historical Context

5.2 BC's Physical Geography

British Columbia is the third largest and the westernmost province in Canada. Extending nearly 944,725 square kilometers (km), BC stretches 1,200 km north to south and 1,050 km east to west at its widest point (Tourism BC 2011a; Welcome BC 2011). Located adjacent to the Pacific Ocean, BC is bordered by the province of Alberta to the east, by the Yukon, Northwest Territories, and Alaska to the north, and by the American states of Washington, Idaho, and Montana to the south.

Figure 5.1: Map of Northern British Columbia

BC has the most varied physical geography of any province in Canada (Barman 1991, 4), as a result of the province's four distinct physiographic regions: the Coast Mountain Range on the western border of the province; Rocky and Columbia mountain ranges in the east; grasslands and forest of the Stikine and interior plateau within the central area of the province; and the Great Interior Plains located in the north-east tip of the province (Tourism BC 2011b). As such, BC's topography is comprised of rugged mountains, diverse flora and fauna, alluvial valleys, dense forest cover, and extensive coastline, islands, inlets, bays, river systems, and steams (Welcome BC 2011; Church & Ryder 2011, 17).

5.3 Introduction to Historical Context

The composition of BC's topography enables a rich endowment of natural resources. As such, both historically and contemporarily the province's growth and prosperity can be attributed to natural resource extraction opportunities; however, this diverse landscape has also distinctly shaped the province's settlement patterns and transportation corridors (Barman 1991, 4). While

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the scope of this thesis does not permit an in-depth review of historical settlement patterns, it is important to note that resource extraction opportunities served as the primary motivation for the exploration and development of the province, beginning with the arrival of the first peoples in through to the subsequent waves of immigration catalyzed by the fur trade, gold discovery, and railway expansion. Resuming the historical narrative post World War II (WW II), the following sections utilize a historical lens to highlight how resource extraction opportunities have influenced the contemporary development of the province, and in conjunction with Canadian immigration policy, create the framework for the successive development of BC's cultural landscape and current immigrant arrival and settlement.

5.3.1 Post WW II: 1946-1966

In the two decades following the Great Depression, BC experienced a 'long boom' as the return of soldiers increased demand for natural resources and facilitated the rapid growth of agriculture, mining, forestry, and fishing throughout the province (Rutherdale 1994, 109-11; Hanlon & Halseth 2005, 2). Concurrently, the strength of the resource economy enabled the development of new resource industries, manufacturing opportunities, and infrastructure growth (McGillivray 2000, 219). During this period, BC's major developments occurred in the northern region of the province and included the construction of the W.A.C Bennett Hydroelectric project, discovery of significant oil and gas reserves, the construction of the Alaska Highway, the connection of the Pacific Great Eastern Railway, and the construction of numerous Pulp and Paper mills (City of Prince George, 2013; McGillivray 200, 15; Tourism Prince George 2008, 27; The Exploration Place, 2013; Tourism Dawson Creek 2009, 27; Hello North 2009, 30; Fort St. John & District Chamber of Commerce 2008, 40). Considered by some as the second opening up of BC's resource frontier, the scale and scope of these developments served as a major attraction to single males seeking employment and economic opportunities (Rutherdale 1994,

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114-16).

Immigration policy following WWII was dominated by the Canadian Government's analogous objectives: the stimulation of population growth and the strengthening of the economy (Ongley & Pearson 1995, 770; Green & Green 1999, 430). As such, the revised Immigration Act targeted immigrants from 'preferred' countries with particular occupations and skills sets in efforts to counteract labour shortages, fill skill gaps, expand domestic markets, and increase the standard of living through the creation of economies of scale (Parai 1975, 455-60; Kelley & Trebilcock 1998, 311; Green & Green 1999, 427-30). While this recruitment structure did attract 'preferred' immigrants, the ambiguous nature of the selection process and frequency of immigration did not satisfy the government's economic objectives, and thus required revisions to the selection criteria (Ongley & Pearson 1995, 767-70; Green & Green 1999, 430). Also during this time, the Canadian Government introduced the sponsorship of family members and relatives, in hopes that family reunification would promote population growth (Green & Green 1999, 430; Parai 1975, 454; Kelley & Trebilcock 1998, 323; Green & Green 1999, 430). While immigration polices continued to favor particular ethnic groups and discriminate against others, revisions to the Act began to reflect the progress made by the United Nations' Declaration of Human Rights. Accordingly, revisions to the Act included the repeal of the Chinese Head Tax, the removal of restrictive passage laws governing Sikh immigration, and restoration of the ability to vote and live within the coastline boundary for Japanese peoples (Ward 1978, 165; Roy 1989, 266; Strong-Boag 1996, 278; McGillivray 2000, 90).

5.3.2 1967-1974

Nearly 100 years after the introduction of Canadian Immigration policy, the Act was significantly revised in 1967 in order to adapt to contemporary demands (Green & Green 1999,

431).This iteration saw the prescription of three specific immigration categories: independents and/or economic class, the family class, and the refugee class (Parai 1975, 459; Green & Green 1999, 432; Li 2003, 24). Moreover, this Act introduced a stringent points system which assessed prospective immigrants on the basis of age, language, education, employment opportunities, and financial ability (Parai 1975, 456; Ongley & Pearson 1995, 771; Kelley & Trebilcock 1998, 351; Green & Green 1999, 431; Li 2003, 23; Waters & Teo 2003, 3). With clear objectives and immigration targets, Canada experienced an influx of ethnically diverse immigrants, many choosing to settle in BC as the result of existing kinship ties and strong economic opportunities (McGillivray 2000, 90; Waters & Teo 2003, 3). Although the southern BC remained the predominant place of settlement for new immigrants, the strong economy in the northern region enticed many new immigrants to settle in smaller resource communities (Strong-Boag 1996, 280; McGillivray 2000, 219; Walton-Roberts 2004, 3; Hyndman et al., 2006, 3).

5.3.3 1974-1985

Tumultuous global market conditions in the late 1970's and early 1980's greatly affected the growth and prosperity of BC, given that province was completely dependent on the resource economy for its success to date. As such, this period marked the end of the 'long boom' and the resurgence of inflation, limited growth, and high unemployment throughout the province (Green & Green 1995, 1013; Kelley & Trebilcock 1998, 382; Green & Green 1999, 432). Resource dependent communities throughout BC struggled to cope with the need for economic restructuring and diversification, and many small communities were forced to shut down during this difficult economic time (Markey et al., 2008, 215; Hanlon & Halseth 2005, 3).

With nation preservation again their key focus, the Canadian Government curtailed immigration target levels between 1974 and 1978 (Green & Green 1999, 432). Due to high

unemployment levels throughout the country, the Immigration Act was again revised in 1978 in attempts fill skilled labor gaps and combat skill saturation, by emphasizing practical training and work experience (Green & Green 1995, 1014; Green & Green 1999, 432). Moreover, this Act implemented a target number for refugee immigration instead of only allowing refugee entry during times international crisis (Green & Green 1995, 1014-1015; Ongley & Pearson, 1995, 771; Knowles 1997, 169; Green & Green 1999, 432; Li 2003, 26).

5.3.4 1986-1993

During the mid-1980's, the Canadian Government recognized two alarming trends throughout the country: the rapid growth of an aging population and the reduction of fertility rates to below replacement levels (Green & Green 1999, 434; Bourne & Rose 2001, 109; Ley & Hiebert 2001, 121). Understanding that immigration was the only solution to this demographic challenge, the Canadian Government increased immigration rates, despite difficult economic times, in order to stimulate population growth and restructure Canada's demographic profile (Ley 2003, 426; Heibert 2006, 40; Reimer 2007, 3). Amendments to the Immigration Act during this time emphasized the recruitment and retention of highly qualified business professionals, technical workers, entrepreneurs, and transnational investment through the creation of three business categories: investors, entrepreneurs, and self-employed workers (Green & Green 1999, 434; Ley & Heibert 2001, 122; Waters & Teo 2003, 4; Hou & Bourne 2006, 1513). Although these changes did not immediately remedy issues surrounding Canada's greying population, increasing immigration did serve as an effective solution for managing market and labor requirements (Green & Green 1999, 434; Ley 2003, 426- 428).

By the end of the 1980's, new patterns of immigrant settlement were apparent in BC due to the settlement of wealthy business migrants and professionals (Waters 2002, 119). While

investment by these immigrants helped to grow secondary and tertiary industries in southern BC, and in turn, reinforce growth and urbanization, the northern region of the province continued to suffer economically as a result of economic restructuring and the stagnation of the resource economy (Berman 1991, 334; Walton-Roberts & Heibert 1997, 117; Knowles 1997, 171; Markey et al., 2008, 215; Hanlon & Halseth 2005, 3).

5.3.5 1994- 2001

During the final years of the twentieth century, revisions to the Immigration Act continued to reflect Canada's long term economic objectives and population growth strategies (Kelley & Trebilcock 1998, 386-387; Ley & Hiebert 2001, 120; Green & Green 2004, 127; Hiebert 2006, 40). Specific modifications included the introduction of immigration target rates as a percentage of the Canadian population per annum (1%), the introduction of an improved refugee management plan, and equalization of admittance rates for immigrants from economic and family classes (Kelley & Trebilcock 1998, 386; Green & Green 2004, 127).

In moving away from the "tap on/ tap off" approach (Green & Green 1999, 432), and instead utilizing immigration as a planning tool to achieve the long-term strategies of the country, the Federal Government demonstrated their understanding of how powerful and influential immigration is to the nation's prosperity (Ley & Hiebert 2001, 120; Hiebert 2006, 40; Green & Green 2004, 128). As such, Canada experienced its highest level of immigration between 1991 and 2000, creating Canada as one of the largest immigrant receiving and multicultural countries in the world (Hou & Bourne 2006, 1506).

Section 2: Contemporary Landscapes

5.4. Introduction to Contemporary Landscapes

As demonstrated by the physiographic overview and historical summary provided in Section One, distinct connections can be drawn between the development of the natural resource economy and the province's immigration and settlement patterns. As such, the following section will expand upon the previous summary by exploring the contemporary cultural landscape through: 1) the discussion of BC's current immigration patterns within BC's core-periphery population distribution; 2) the provision of community profiles for the three study locations; and 3) the review of connections between the development of immigration policy and contemporary immigration concerns, such as marriage migration.

5.4.1 Situating Contemporary Immigration: BC's Struggle to "Share the Wealth"

The steady settlement and integration of immigrant peoples over the last 160 years has resulted in BC's diverse population. Presently, BC's total population is estimated at 4,573,321 persons and nearly all of the province's population growth (totaling nearly 1% in 2011) can be attributed to immigration (BC Statistics 2011).

Due to its unique geography, BC has been endowed with an abundance of natural resources which have both catalyzed and constrained the province's development. As such, settlement patterns reflect BC's history of uneven growth and change, resulting in the core concentration of the population in the southern region of the province (90%) and only a marginal percentage in the northern region (10%) (Markey et al., 2006, 21; Welcome BC 2008).

The high population density in the southern region of the province can be attributed to the strong economy focused within secondary, tertiary, and quaternary sectors, the desirable climate, and the availability of social and cultural opportunities (Bourne & Rose 2001, 110; Ley &

Hiebert 2001, 121; Hou & Picot 2004, 8; McDonald 2004, 86; Walton Roberts 2004, 3; Hou & Bourne 2006, 1506; Hyndman et al., 2006, 3). Accordingly, the lower mainland's largest city, Vancouver, has become the second most popular immigrant receiving city in Canada attracting nearly 90% of all immigrant settlement in BC (Henin & Bennett 2002, 3; McDonald 2004, 86; Hou & Picot 2004, 8; Hou & Borne 2006, 1506; Radford 2007, 47; Nolin et al., 2009, 4).

In contrast, the northern region of the province is recognized to have a smaller population base given that the climate and rugged terrain pose barriers to mobility and development, as well as limit access to services and cultural networks (Rose & Desmarais 2007, 56; Reimer 2007, 5; Nolin & McCallum 2007, 147; Nolin et al., 2009, 4). Due to these constraints, northern, rural and remote communities struggle to recruit and retain new migrants (Bourne & Rose 2001, 111; Walton-Roberts 2004, 26), and as such, only 1% of the region's total population is comprised of immigrant peoples (Welcome BC 2008, 4).

From these statistics, one is able to understand that immigrants, similarly to Canadian born residents, prefer to settle in urban settings because these areas provide a sense of familiarity, security, and belonging which helps to ease the adjustment into social and economic opportunities (Bourne & Rose 2001, 110; Waters & Teo 2003, 14; McDonald 2004, 87; Walton-Roberts 2004, 24; Reimer 2007, 3). By settling within rural areas, such as the resource dependent communities in northern BC, immigrants may experience difficulty locating kinship networks, obtaining employment, or accessing language settlement and language programs (Bourne & Rose 2001, 110; Hou & Picot 2004, 8; Waters & Teo 2003, 14; McDonald 2004, 87; Sherrell et al., 2005, 82; Hyndman et al., 2006, 19). As a result, many new immigrants choose to relocate to urban centres after initially attempting settlement in rural areas (Reimer 2007, 3).

While settlement within urban centers enables a more effective successful settlement and integration experience for newcomers (Bourne & Rose 2001, 110; Hou & Picot 2004, 8; Waters & Teo 2003, 14), Federal and Provincial Governments have expressed concern about the negative externalities associated with this pattern (Sherrell et al., 2005, 82; Hyndman et al., 2006, 19). For instance, the disproportionate settlement of immigrants in urban centres places increased strain on the absorptive capacity of infrastructure, transportation corridors, affordable housing, social programs, and health services (Ley & Hiebert 2001, 121; McDonald 2004, 86; Hou & Picot 2005, 13; Rose & Desmarais 2007, 55). Thus, the Federal Government has promoted regionalization in order to counteract the strain urban areas withstand in supporting large immigrant populations, and conversely, the struggle rural areas endure in trying to recruit and retain immigrant peoples (Sherrell et al., 2005, 76). Rural Secretariat Marilyn Read corroborates the effectiveness of regionalization when she discusses how increased immigration can influence growth and change in rural communities, she states:

> Just a few immigrants...can make a large difference to rural communities [...] Immigrants and other new residents can mean increases in local tax revenues, an increase in the retail sales base, and an additional source of skills and labour, entrepreneurs, leaders, volunteers and other engaged community members. In a global world, immigrants can also bring the advantages of economic, social and cultural diversity and innovation (Quoted in Rose & Desmarais 2007, 55).

From these statements, one is able to see the correlations between regionalization and increased economic development, population growth, and the ability to attract more services (Rose & Desmarais 2007, 54; Walton-Roberts 2004, 3; Sherrell et al., 2005, 77). However, the Federal Government's strategy to "shar[e] the burden, [and] sprea[d] the wealth" (Sherrell et al., 2005, 76) has been repeatedly undermined by the continual curtailment of "health, social services, education, legal and other areas" (Walton-Roberts 2004, 25).

Northern BC is a prime example of how the government's limited investment in infrastructure and service delivery negatively affects the region's ability to successfully recruit and retain immigrants. Furthermore, funding cutbacks have strained existing infrastructure and have weakened resource dependent communities ability to play "little if any active role in immigrant recruitment" (Walton-Roberts 2004, 24), or to provide effective integration assistance (Bourne & Rose 2001, 110; Reimer 2007, 3). As such, northern BC is understood as a challenging landscape for immigrant arrival, settlement, and integration.

5.5 Community Profiles

5.5.1 Prince George

Prince George is commonly called "BC's Northern Capital" given that it is the largest city within northern BC and is renowned for its industrial economy, transportation corridors, as well as being an up-and-coming educational centre with an emergent arts and athletics scene (City of Prince George, 2013; Tourism PG, 2013). Located between the northern and southern transition of the Rocky Mountain trench at nearly the geographic center of the province, the City of Prince George is situated at the junction of the Nechako and Fraser rivers, at the intersection of major Highways 97 and 16, as well as the at the crossing of north/south and east/west railways Tourism PG, 2013). In addition to offering a natural setting that is rich in leisure and recreational opportunities, the City of Prince George also offers amenities common to larger centers (City of Prince George 2013; Tourism PG 2013, 8).

5.5.1.1 Economy

The City of Prince George is advantageously located at the junction of major rivers, transportation corridors, and rail lines (City of Prince George 2013). As such, the City's economy is based on optimizing its natural endowments, and centres around the forest industry, the supply and transportation of goods and services, and other resource extraction opportunities

such as mining, oil and gas (Lantz 2013, 15; City of Prince George 2013; Initiatives Prince George 2013a, 1). Prince George is renowned for the strength of its forest industry, given that it is a leading global supplier of pulp and paper and home to fourteen sawmills, bioenergy plants, and numerous other wood manufacturing and industrial facilities (City of Prince George, 2013; Initiatives Prince George 2013a, 1). Other industrial activities, such as mining and oil and gas exploration, also occur in close proximity to Prince George and enable the city to capitalize on revenue streams generated by these activities (Initiatives Prince George 2013a, 2).

Although the City's economy is historically and contemporarily rooted within natural resource extraction, only 8.3% of business activity and 4.3% of employment within Prince George can be directly attributed to the primary sector (Lantz 2013, 22; Initiatives Prince George 2013a, 1). Nevertheless, the growing strength of the primary and secondary sectors over the past decades have enabled the emergence of tertiary and quaternary sectors with a growing focus on health care, tourism, education, as well as professional, scientific, and technical services (Initiatives Prince George 2013a, 1; Lantz 2013, 21-22).

Moreover, the growth of Prince George's economy in last ten years has enabled a steady increase in the City's employment rate, averaging a 2.4% increase in the last three years (Initiatives Prince George 2013b, 1). Overall, the City's ability to maintain a balance between rural and urban attributes enables Prince George to be recognized as a community with an affordable quality of life, above average median incomes ($40,657) (BC Statistics 2012a, 3), and for having one of the highest employment rates, both provincially and nationally (Initiatives Prince George 2013b, 1).

5.5.1.2 Demography

The City of Prince George is home to a population of 84,232 (within the census area), which is equivalent to a population density of 4.8 people per square kilometer (Statistics Canada 2013a). Given that Prince George is centrally located within the province, the City functions as a service/trade centre for 334,757 residents from surrounding communities (City of Prince George, 2013). The diverse economic, employment, and educational opportunities offered in Prince George have facilitated positive growth of the City's population (0.8% per year) over the last five years (Initiatives Prince George 2013b, 1) and has enabled greater gender balance, with men only slightly accounting for the greater proportion of the population (50.3%) (Statistics Canada 2013a). Women, between the ages of 30-45 years comprise the largest proportion of the population (14.32%), followed by men within the same age range (13.82%) (Statistics Canada, 2013a); the median age of the City's population is 39 and 58% of the City's population is involved in common law relationships or marriages (Statistics Canada 2013a). Notably, Prince George is home to a robust student population which account for nearly 7% of the City's residents (Initiatives Prince George 2013a, 1). However, nearly 26% of Prince George's adult population does not have post-secondary education (BC Statistics 2012a, 2).

With regard to language, 89% of Prince George's population speaks English as their mother tongue, and only 1.5% of residents speak a language other than English or French as their mother tongue; both of these rates are distinctly different from the provincial average, which are 71% and 27% respectively (Statistics Canada 2013a). Other dominant languages within Prince George include (list in order of frequency) Punjabi, Tagalog, German, Italian, Dutch, Chinese, and Portuguese (Statistics Canada 2013a).

In terms of population by citizenship, only 9.73% of the City's residents are immigrants, a number which has decreased by -2.1%, between 2006 and 2011 (BC Statistics 2012a, 2). Predominant ethnicities present in Prince George are noted as Canadian, British, Scottish, French, and German (Statistics Canada, 2011); Immigrants from the United States of America (USA), Asia and the Middle East, Northern Europe, and Western Europe are the top source areas of immigrants living in Prince George, with only 5% of population noted as visible minorities (Statistics Canada, 2011).

5.5.2 Fort St. John & Dawson Creek

Fort St. John and Dawson Creek are two of the largest communities in northern BC, and both are renowned for their rich endowment of natural resources and vibrant, youthful populations (Hello North 2009, 29; City of Dawson Creek, 2012). Located within the northeast corner of the province, within the Peace River Region, Fort St. John and Dawson Creek are situated 438 km and 404 km north of Prince George, and are also positioned near the provincial and territorial borders of Alberta and Yukon. The City of Dawson Creek serves as the point of convergence for four major highways and is Mile "0" of the Alaska Highway, whereas Fort St. John is commonly referred to as the "Energetic City" and is considered the oil and gas capital of the province (Hello North 2009, 30).

5.5.2.1 Economy

The topography surrounding Fort St. John and Dawson Creek consists of a mix of plateaus, river valleys, and expansive prairie terrain given its location adjacent to the border of two distinct geomorphic regions: the Cordillera and Interior Plains (Fort St. John & District Chamber of Commerce 2008, 10; Bone 2002, 26). This landscape thus sustains approximately 1,700 farms, which generate $77 million dollars per year, and encompasses a wide range of agricultural uses, such as dairy, beef cattle, and bison farming, in addition to organic vegetable

farms and greenhouse horticulture (Fort St. John& District Chamber of Commerce 2008, 10). Other land uses within the surrounding area include oil and gas extraction, and forestry (Fort St. John & District Chamber of Commerce 2008, 10).

Although Fort St. John is home to numerous sawmills and one of the world's largest OSB mills, oil and gas extraction dominates the City's economy (Fort St. John & District Chamber of Commerce 2008, 10-11). Exploration and production from the oil and gas industry surrounding the City of Fort St. John has rapidly increased in the last decade, due to decreased global availability these resources (Fort St. John & District Chamber of Commerce 2008, 11). As such, nearly one third of all employment in this area is connected to the oil and gas industry, given that this region holds one of Canada's largest natural gas deposits, most of which is still untapped (Fort St. John & District Chamber of Commerce 2008, 11; South Peace Economic Development Commission, 2010). Accordingly, the strength of this industry has enabled growth in other sectors, such as agriculture, clean energy, forestry, and more recently the service sector (South Peace Economic Development Commission, 2010; City of Dawson Creek, 2013).

5.5.2.2 Demography

The City of Fort St. John is home to a population of 18,699 (within the census area), which has increased by 5.7% since the 2006 Census, and services approximately 62,000 people from within city limits and the surround communities (Statistics Canada 2012b, 1; Tourism BC 2009, 29). Given the economic climate of Fort St. John, and by correlation employment opportunities, a greater proportion of males than females reside in this area (51%) (Statistics Canada 2012b, 1). Males, between the ages of 15-30 years comprise the largest proportion of the population, followed by females aged 15-30 years and male aged 30-45 years (Statistics Canada 2012b, 1).

The City of Dawson Creek is home to 11,583 residents (within the census area) and has experienced a 5.4% population increase between 2006 and 2011 (Statistics Canada 2012c). Per square kilometer, the population density of Dawson Creek is 475.4 and the city is a service and supply hub for numerous outlying communities (Statistics Canada 2012c; Dawson Creek, 2011). Unlike Prince George and Fort St. John, females comprise a slightly higher proportion of the population in Dawson Creek (51%), with men and women in the age group of 20-44 occupying the largest proportions of the population (Statistics Canada, 2012c; BC Statistics, 2011).

Fort St. John boasts a 4.9% unemployment rate, in addition to a median income of $30,806, which is slightly higher than the provincial average (BC Statistics 2012b). Mining and oil and gas, construction, and retail are the primary employment industries within Fort St John, with the top three occupations concentrated within: 1) Trades, transport, & equipment operators; 2) Sales & service; and 3) Business, finance, & administration (BC Statistics 2012b). In contrast, the unemployment rate in Dawson Creek is 6.1%, and the median income is $26,856 (BC Statistics 2012c, 1). Dawson Creek's diversified service industry employs the largest number of residents, followed by accommodation and food services, health care and social assistance, construction, and education (City of Dawson Creek 2011, 8; BC Statistics 2012c, 2).

Predominant ethnic origins in Fort St. John are (in order of concentration) English, Canadian, Scottish, German, Irish, French, Ukrainian, Norwegian, and Russian; however, with regard to language, German, Spanish, and Cree are the principle languages spoken in Fort St. John, other than English and French (BC Statistics 2012b). Immigrants from the United States of America (USA), Northern Europe, and Eastern Europe are the top source areas of immigrants living in Fort St. John, and only 3% of population is noted as visible minorities (BC Statistics 2012b, 5).

Predominant ethnic origins in Dawson Creek are noted to be (in order of concentration) English, Canadian, German, Scottish, Irish, and Metis, and only 8% of the population speaks a different language, other than Canada's official languages, as their mother tongue (Statistics Canada, 2012; BC Statistics 2012c). Immigrants comprise 7% of Dawson Creek's total population, with top immigration source areas comprising the USA, the United Kingdom, Asia and the Middle East, and Southeast Asia, and 2.5% of the city's population is of a visible minority (BC Statistics 2012c).

5.5.3 Concluding Remarks on Study Locations

While Prince George, Fort St. John, and Dawson Creek offer many opportunities, they also present unique challenges to the settlement and integration of new immigrants. As highlighted by the above profiles, these communities are rural, non-metropolitan centers which depend on resource extraction for their livelihoods. As such, these communities retain the traditional frontier mentality of this region, and a times, can be harsh, unwelcoming landscapes to newcomers.

Moreover, the small immigrant population and the limited presence of visible minorities within northern BC present further settlement and integration challenges, as there are limited cultural supports and cultural refueling opportunities. Therefore, one can understand that this cultural landscape poses distinct challenges to the successful negotiation of place and identity for new immigrants.

5.6 Situating Contemporary Immigration Policy in Canada

Canada's current immigration policy, the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA), was put forward as legislation in 2001 and officially came into effect in 2002 (Government of Canada, 2013). Over the last twelve years, this act has been amended on thirteen

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occasions to reflect the priorities and strategies of the sitting government(s) (Government of

Canada, 2013). Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) describes the IRPA to:

> Respond to the needs of communities in all parts of the country by creating opportunities for individuals to come to Canada to make an economic, social, cultural and civic contributions while also realizing their full potential, with a view to becoming citizens; [in addition to] support[ing] global humanitarian efforts to assist those in need of protection. (CIC 2009)

With these objectives at the fore, the current Immigration Act aims to balance the 'successful'

integration of immigrants into Canadian society, as well as optimize long term economic and

population growth objectives (Li 2003, 79).

While clear strides have been made to introduce policy with a humanitarian and human

capital focus, Canadian immigration policy remains centered on the recruitment of immigrants

who best serve national objectives. While this objective is not new, the Immigration Act has

required frequent revision in order to keep current with shifting goals and priorities. As such, the

reactionary development of this policy has resulted in many gaps and oversights, as well as the

inclusion of policy which exposes immigrant peoples to undue vulnerability and/or manipulates

their basic rights.

The immigration of foreign brides to Canada for the purpose of marriage is a prime

example of how contemporary policy fails to account for the complexity of some immigration

processes. As mentioned in previous chapters, scholars have highlighted how the marriage

migration is a "hidden avenue" (Nolin et al., 2011, 119), given that there are no processes in

place to officially track or monitor how many women are migrating in this manner (Brinig 2001,

321; Del Vecchio 2007, 179). Moreover, others have argued against the structural dependency

that is created by the spousal sponsorship relationship (Belleau 2003b, 597; Pehar (2003, 171);

Rossiter 2005, 494), and furthermore, have identified how the sponsorship framework exposes

spouses to increased vulnerability and opportunities for abuse (Smith 2006, 6; Merali 2008, 282; Merali 2009, 3). While these scholars have shed light on an important social issue, the Canadian Government has failed to take action to investigate or remedy to these concerns. Rather, the Government has demonstrated their indifference to understanding marriage migration as a complex process which necessitates in depth examination, by instead choosing to focus on marriage migration as form of "marriage fraud" (CIC 2013) wherein manipulate marital unions "to cheat their way into Canada" (CIC 2012).
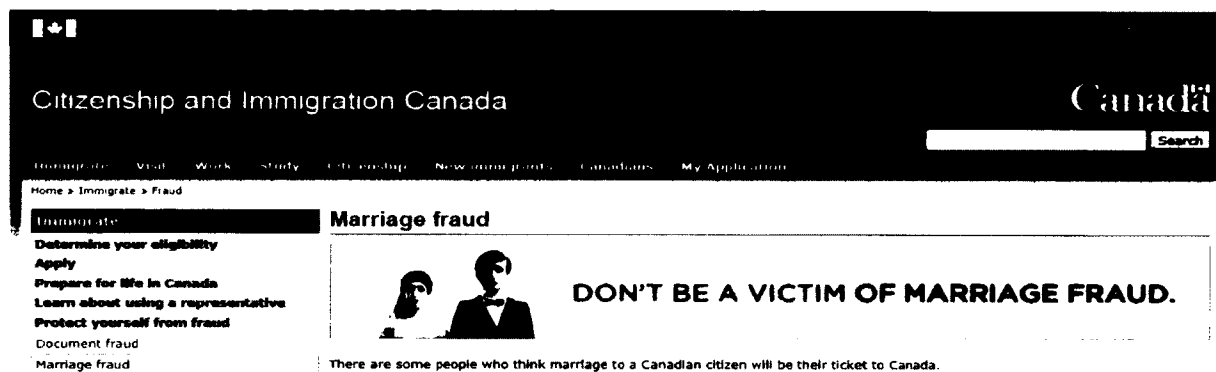
Figure 5.2: Citizenship & Immigration Canada Advertisement Profiling Efforts to Combat Marriage Fraud

Source: CIC 2013

Accordingly, recent initiatives by CIC aim to crack down on "marriages of convenience" by implementing new regulations to the spousal sponsorship process (CIC 2013). These regulations include the addition of a mandatory two year co-habitation period, following the qualification of a sponsored spouse as a permanent resident, in order to demonstrate the legitimacy of the relationship (CIC 2013). While this regulation is intended to deter people from using marriage as a method to dodge traditional migration avenues, this amendment has in fact counteracted the progress made by scholars and activists who in the early 2000's successfully petitioned to have the period of dependency (the time period before a sponsored spouse could apply for permanent residency) reduced from ten years to five years, and later to three years. In

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failing to recognize the fundamental issues which centre around marriage migration process, and instead increasing the length of compulsory engagement in the sponsorship relationship, the Canadian Government has again prioritize economic initiatives over the wellness and safety of immigrants.

5.7 Conclusion

The intent of this chapter was to highlight of the social, cultural, political, economic landscapes in northern BC. By contrasting locational information with an historical review of settlement, development, and immigration policy, this chapter establishes a contextual framework and provides a basis of understanding for the analysis and discussion.

Part 2: Research Findings, Analysis & Discussion

As described within Chapter One, Part Two of this thesis provides my research findings, analysis, and discussion. To begin, brief vignettes are offered in order to introduce the research participants and contextualize the women's narratives in Chapter Six and Seven.

Participant Vignettes

After establishing herself as successful "First Teacher" at a Catholic High school in the Philippines, 40-year-old **MONA** was encouraged by her family, friends, and students to begin correspondence with a Pen Pal in order to find love. MONA was introduced to RAY, a 34-year-old Canadian man with whom her cousin had been corresponding, but had not made a connection. After two years of letter writing and a proposal from RAY during his visit to the Philippines, MONA decided marry and migrate to northern BC during the winter of 1990, to achieve her goal of starting a family.

Looking to start a new life for herself and her young son after leaving an abusive marriage in the Ukraine, **SVITLANA** registered with an introduction agency at the age of 28. SVITLANA was soon introduced to CHRIS, a 52-year-old Canadian man who seemed well-travelled, very family oriented, and with whom she felt a connection. After dating and corresponding for three years, CHRIS suggested they marry and start their life as a new family together when she and ALEX arrived in Canada.

Enrolled in a friendship website by a friend, **ANNA,** a 33-year-old nurse from the Philippines, was surprised to meet DAVE, a 46-year-old Canadian man from northern BC who expressed great interest in getting to know her. ANNA, was not initially looking for a love connection, but rather looking to gain insight into western culture as she wanted to immigrate to the United

States as a nurse. After corresponding for two years, ANNA and DAVE decided to meet, and eventually marry, in the Philippines in 2006.

After dedicating herself to her family, education, and business for thirty years, **SITSIT**, a 54-year-old widowed mother of four prioritized her happiness and joined a matchmaking website in order to find love. On megafriends.com, SITSIT met FRANK, a retired Canadian man living in northern BC. SITSIT and FRANK began exchanging letters on a daily basis and after 8 months, FRANK visited the Philippines and proposed. After the marriage, SITSIT and her youngest daughter immigrated to Canada in the fall of 2007.

Following the separation from her husband of eight years, **ELENA** a 30-year-old accountant from the Ukraine, began using an international matchmaking website. While on Kiss.com, ELENA met STEVE, a 43-year-old divorcee and father, who worked within the natural resource extraction industry in northern BC. After corresponding for a few years, STEVE visited ELENA in the Ukraine and they decided to marry. Following their marriage, Elena and her nine-year-old son immigrated to northern BC in 2007.

After the tragic death of her four-year-old son and the subsequent dissolution of her relationship, **KITTY** was inspired to seek a fresh start in a new country. At the age of 33, KITTY applied to become a Live-in Caregiver in Canada and was matched with MIKE, a 40-year-old, recently divorced father of two. Soon after arriving in northern BC in 1999, KITTY and MIKE's professional relationship became romantic and they were married within a year.

While on vacation in the Czech Republic, **TAMARA**, a 29-year-old Engineer from the Ukraine met RICK, a forty something Canadian man and father of two. TAMARA and RICK made an instant connection and began a very romantic long distance relationship. After corresponding for

two years over the Internet, RICK travelled to the Ukraine to marry TAMARA. Although the

VISA process was difficult, TAMARA arrived in northern BC during the winter of 2000.

Chapter 6 : Transnational Ethnographies of the Particular: Narratives of Negotiation

6.1 Introduction

The seven women described in the vignettes above generously participated in this research in order share their experiences of marriage migration and perceptions of settlement and integration into resource dependent communities in northern BC. Collectively, these women described their participation to be motivated by their desire to move beyond typical stereotypes of 'mail order brides' and generalized understandings of marriage migration, to instead illustrate the particularity of their experiences, the depth of their relationships, as well as the challenges and opportunities encountered during this transitional period in their lives. As such, their narratives of negotiation weave a partial 'transnational ethnography of the particular' (Abu-Lughod 1991; Nolin 2006), highlighting tensions, power struggles, and intense vulnerability, as well as agency, self-determination, and (re)invention throughout their journeys to establish sense of place and identity.

6.2 Marital Relationships

Guided by transnationalism and feminism as theoretical frameworks, this section will analyze how global, local, and gendered experiences shaped the impetus for, and process of, marriage migration.

6.2.1 Motivations for Marriage Migration & Methods of Introduction

As discussed in detail within Chapter Four, women have many reason for entering into a marriage migration relationship and equally as many avenues through which to meet a potential spouse (Constable 2007, 254; Chun 1996, 1175; Kabeer 2007, 37). Underlying motivations for marriage migration recognized in the literature range from the genuine search for love on an international scale (Constable 2007, 254; Chun 1996, 1175; Kabeer 2007, 37) to the pursuit of

stability and status through the creation of a marital relationship (Belleau 2003b, 95; Constable 2003b, 167; Lauser 2008, 102; Chun 1996, 1171). However, the diverse experiences and motivations discussed by the foreign brides who shared their stories reflect the particularity of marriage migration relationships and call attention to the need to move beyond generalized understandings of this process (Piper & Roces 2003, 8-9, Constable 2007, 253; Brining 2001, 321).

For instance, stability and status were not identified by any of the participants as motivating factors in the decision to marry and migrate. In contrast to the literature, all of the women who participated in this research had received post-secondary educations and were all gainfully employed: TAMARA and SVITLANA were trained as engineers, MONA as a teacher, ANNA worked as a nurse, KITTY and SITSIT were owners of their own small businesses, and ELENA was an accountant. While some of the participants were casually encouraged by friends and family to consider introduction agencies or online introduction website dating methods, none of the women were coerced to enlist these services, nor were their decisions instigated by gendered obligations and/or a need to support family members through remittances.

SVITLANA, SITSIT, and ELENA, described their primary motivation to centre on the possibility of finding love and the opportunity for a fresh start after enduring traumatic and/or difficult events in their past. For example, SITSIT identified her hardship and sacrifice after years of living as a single parent to motivate her choice:

> **SITSIT:** *"Before, in the Philippines, I work in the government for 32 years. Then, I have been widowed for 18 years. We stayed [married] for nine years, and then 18 years of being alone and taking care of my children. So, I devote my time for them. Now, I let them grow and they are all professionals. There are four of them, four kids [...] So for 18 years, that I devote my time for them; so now it is my time for me. To be free and find happiness [...] When my younger kids, [pause] graduated, I decide to find a husband."*

Figure 6.1: SITSIT "New Beginnings"

In Figure 6.1, SITSIT demonstrates how she has forged a new identity and sense of self in

Canada by taking on new interests as part of her new beginning.

In contrast, distaste for the attitude and disposition of men from their countries of origin,

due to negative experiences in their previous relationships, influenced SVITLANA's and

ELENA's choice to a seek partners from a different cultural background:

> **SVITLANA:** *"I was thinking about it and the gambling was just sort of part of it. The drinking was really affecting me too. One day he just, with a knife, that was really scary, he threw me down on the floor. And he started calling me all kinds of names [...] And he grabbed me at my throat and he had the knife in my face and I was crying and saying: "What are you doing? We have a child right there." Boy that scarred me. That was it, I had to leave [...] So [in my new relationship] I was just looking for somebody who would appreciate me."*

> **ELENA:** *"I used to, I used to be married for eight years in the Ukraine. It happens that I was disappointed with my marriage, get divorced. Umm, tried dating a few guys, get disappointed in all of them, plus we have way more women than men. Umm, alcoholism is a big thing for men in Ukraine, so I decided to make my search bigger, which Internet was a perfect thing for, to do something like that [...] So I choose few countries, and that is how I was looking for my husband and actually, on the first day of my try, I saw profile of my present husband and I liked him."*

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KITTY also faced a difficult situation in her past which triggered her enrollment in the Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP) and immigration to Canada. Although the nature of her relationship with her employer was sincerely business focused at the onset of their communication, KITTY and MIKE felt a connection during their business correspondence and their relationship became romantic soon after her arrival in Canada:

> **KITTY:** *"I once had a little boy from a previous relationship but he passed away in his early life, he was just four years old when he died [...] Yeah, actually everything happened from that year [when my son died] and umm, I thought maybe when I go to Canada I want a fresh start. I want a new life. I want a new direction. And all of the past things in the Philippines; forget it, start a new life. That's all I always think. I am a grown up, I am an adult so, and that's, I, I feel like I am a rolling stone; I don't gather any moss. I feel like that. I just wanted to try somewhere new. Try something new. Share my skill or whatever."*

Figure 6.2 was selected by KITTY as one of her favorite images taken during the Photovoice process given that it depicts her youngest child, whom she gave the same name as her deceased son in order for his memory to live on in Canada.

Figure 6.2: KITTY "Son"

For ANNA, TAMARA, and MONA, the introduction to their current spouse happened by chance, when love was not a primary motivation. For instance, ANNA was conversing in chat rooms looking to make friends and learn about western culture before migrating to the United States to pursue a nursing career, whereas TAMARA met her husband while on vacation, and MONA was encouraged to take up correspondence with an unsuccessful Pen Pal of her cousin's.

> **ANNA:** *"Yes, I was actually studying; reviewing for the registration for nursing in the Americas [...] We met in like the website. Like friendship website. I forgot the name; friend umm, friend finder?" [...] I, I had communicated other people too, but it seemed like he wanted to know me. We was just so umm, honest. Like he wrote a lot and I thought: "Maybe, he is a good person!" [Laughs].*

> **TAMARA:** *"Oh, I met my future husband and we fall in love, which is a very romantic story. And we date and he came to see me so many times [...] Yeah. It was very romantic, very quick court. We met in Prague, in Czech Republic. Yeah, he was there in Czech Republic and after that we correspond on the Internet, email."*

> **MONA:** *"[RAY] was just among the collections of whom to choose but he was just sending her an introductory letter and they hadn't really started. It was just lying out on the dresser and I picked it up. She said: "Ok, you have this. He is a good guy." I am reading blah blah, he is from [northern BC], Canada and I thought: "Maybe he is a good guy? He is a professional. Ok! Whatever!" [...] It was 'Rainbow' book that was published with the cousin of mine. And then he was looking, and looking. And I never had myself published, so I don't know how I did; how I started as pen pals. Maybe it was my students. They would always say: "Here, you are not married; you will like it."*

In sharing motivations and experiences which differ significantly from the prominent literature, the women's narratives reaffirm the need to move beyond hegemonic discourses and associations within the marriage migration process (Piper & Roces 2003, 8-9; Constable 2007, 253), and instead seek to understand how individuals are positioned by their particular experiences (Brining 2001, 321).

While the majority of literature on the topic of marriage migration often prominently features negative experiences of the process, one is able to understand from the experiences

shared above that marriage migration can enable individuals to transverse their local constraints and engage in new social realities, by way of exposure to new information, interactions, and opportunities (Constable 2007, 254). The choice to initiate this type of relationship, in conjunction with the decision to marry and migrate, illustrates how the women who participated in this research were responsible for their own agency and mobility (Chun 1996, 1186) and are thus active participants in the renegotiation of their sense of place and identity.

6.2.2 Gender Ideologies, Cultural Reproductions & Stereotypes

As discussed in Chapter Four, gender ideologies and cultural reproductions are often recognized within the literature to shape both male and female interest in establishing marriage migration relationships (Belleau 2003b, 595; Mix & Piper 2003, 56; Constable 2005, 2; Lauser 2008, 102; Del Rosario 2005, 255; Cabrera 2007, 54; Del Vecchio 2007, 189). Within all interviews, conversations touched on the notion of stereotypes and ideologies influencing the selection of spousal partners; however, none of the women identified with choosing their partner, or (knowingly) being selected, based upon physical appearances or cultural reproductions of gendered ideologies.

Interestingly, though, some participants did comment on the stereotypes associated with participants of marriage migration relationships commonly identified in the literature. For example, MONA spoke about the perception of foreign brides as 'predatory manipulators' (Cunneen & Stubbs 2003, 74; Constable 2007, 253; Kelly 2001, 182) who are only interested in relationships for financial gain:

> **MONA:** *"I was asking my husband: "How come, you said you had lots of pen pals, how come you choose me?" And he said: "There were lots," and I said: "Probably more beautiful than me and younger?" and he said: "No, no, no, no! I choose you because it was only your letters that said sensible things. Other girls always talk about money. When they started asking money from me, I, I, I, lost my impression. My impression was a little bit shaky."*

Additionally, SVITLANA highlights how both males and females participate in (re)creating false expectations through the use of gender ideologies and stereotypes:

> **SVITLANA:** *"The biggest mistake that [men] make when look for woman on Internet, is that they looking for a, a sex slave, or cleaning lady, or just beautiful trophy and never actually try to understand or realize that your life, you know the two of you; you are actually a person inside this body. And there is feelings and everything else [...] So somebody is looking, ahh, somebody's hunting for, for like success and the money, like the lifestyle you know to marry. But somebody is looking for feelings, for a family. So everybody has a different view of what they want."*

In contrast to predatory stereotypes, SVITLANA and MONA also shared comments which highlighted how women are sometimes objectified and exploited during the selection of prospective marital partners (Cabrera 2007, 54; Chan 1988, 34). For instance, MONA tells the story of her friend who also found her spouse through pen pal correspondence:

> **MONA:** *"My other best friend who is also a teacher who married a, a Dutch [...]her [relationship] was different because there were like lots of them in line and he was choosing them. They were pen pals, they were pen pals though, they were writing; there were lots of them [...] he gathered them all in one hotel for choosing them. [laughs] She was so brave, I said: "I could not do that! I don't think so!" Others just really try hard; wearing sexy clothes and what not. Naw, I was just myself."*

During one of our interview meetings, SVITLANA and I watched a Russian documentary film she had found on the Internet which profiled negative experiences of marriage migration. During the screening, SVITLANA paused the film to translate the dialogue and explain the scene, as the selection process highlighted was similar to her experience with her husband CHRIS:

> **SVITLANA:** *"Yeah, they just figure that because we are poor and we hungry, we want to walk on our tippy toes in front of them and do everything they want, just because they think we are hungry and poor [...] The American, he will pick the girl, you know from the picture, but then he come and meet her and he finds something he doesn't like about her, he writes it down and puts how much it is going to cost him. For example, oh maybe she got front teeth are crooked or something, it is going to cost me so much [...] He divided piece of paper into two paragraphs, and he put the two girls names on there. And he put: "One is blonde the other is brunette." Yeah, so then he said: "One has good teeth and another one not so good. One has good breasts and the other one is flat, but, she is better in bed than the other one with big boobs" [...] It is an unfortunate truth, [the film] says that: "The girls do feel humiliated this way, and embarrassed the way they get picked. But, because some of them come from such a small town, or from a village somewhere, that*

they have nothing and that they are just happy to get, just to get out and have somebody who is happy to take them. So they just, you know, close their eyes for all of that embarrassment. They are just ready to go through it for that miracle; to live across the ocean. But how fabulous that life is across the ocean, the girls and their parents have no idea about actual real life there [...] Yeah, I didn't have to sit at the same table, but there was four girls before me that CHRIS met. I asked interpreter, she was so nice that she did tell me that. Yeah I was the last one, she said: "For dessert."

The above comments highlight how a foreign bride's body can function as a space of negotiation within some marriage migration relationships, given that some women are selected based upon physical, ethnic, and "racial" characteristics. Moreover, these comments reinforce how unrealistic expectations, informed by gender ideologies and cultural reproductions, often underscore motivations for seeking marriage migration relationships and thus can provide the foundation for inequitable power dynamics, mistreatment, and abuse. Although the women who participated in this research were in control of their choice to marry and migrate, it is important also to recognize the broad range of experiences and circumstances associated with this type of relationship, as well as the vulnerability and uncertainly that is involved in this process, regardless of one's choice (Brining 2001, 321; Piper & Roces 2003, 8-9; Constable 2007, 253).

6.2.3 Uncertainty, Vulnerability, and Abuse

Given that each of the women lived full, well established lives within their countries of origin, the decision to marry and migrate was not taken lightly. When asked about their choices, many of the women talked about feelings of uncertainty, stating that it was such a significant life choice that they hesitated before making the final decision. For instance, ELENA recalls being scared of choosing her new relationship over her life in the Ukraine:

> **ELENA:** *"There was this period when I was scared, when he was ready for example to send me money [for English lessons] and it like hit me all of the sudden: "Oh oh, it is getting serious, what, what, it is so far, what if I will not like it? It's different country, different language, all of my family will be so far behind." So, I stopped writing to him just because I didn't want to say "No" because I really liked him, but I didn't want to say "Yes". So, I wasn't writing to him and he was keep writing me little short notes: "Please respond. Please, if you will not like, it I will buy you ticket and you will go back [...] And*

that is why we have hard decision to make because, oh you know, corresponding is one thing. And get knowing each other, really, like live with each other for a while, we didn't have that chance. It's why we decided, like our marriage was on paper but really it started when I came here and we started living together and that is why we promised each other, if we have to get a divorce, we will be like, it will be like no problem. We will do it like civilized people, without any regrets or anything."

Similarly, ANNA commented on how she was reluctant to leave the Philippines to start her new

life in Canada, even though she was already married and carrying their first child:

ANNA: *"[I had] mixed feelings actually because I know that I have to come because I am married to someone who lives here. And then I was pregnant. Mixed feelings. I was actually crying in the airport [...] I was texting my friends: "I have to go now, we are boarding." And I was starting to miss my Mom, because we are so close [...] I still have mixed feelings, but I am just thinking about my Son and the safety here."*

Although MONA and RAY were very compatible during their pen pal courtship, MONA recalls

having doubts about how their relationship would work once she immigrated to Canada:

MONA: *"It was kind of exciting and I did not really understand and I said: "Is this it?" Or "Is he really the one?" I started to like get scared. And I said: "Oh! This is reality! This is not a writing anymore. What if we don't like each other in our, in our, in his stay of twenty six days? What am I willing to give up? What is he? [...] So I decided, and we decided and he said: "When I go back to [northern BC] I will work on the papers and I will petition you as fiancé visa and we will go from there; but I wish that I could bring you right away. But I said: "That doesn't matter, because I have to work on my papers too. So, but, it's ok; we will survive. If this is really, if this is really the real thing, this will happen." So along the way there was lots of, there was lots of doubts."*

In addition to discussions of uncertainty, the majority of the women spoke about the

intense risk and vulnerability associated with marriage migration relationships. MONA, KITTY,

ANNA, and SVITLANA recounted stories of very negative experiences of marriage migration

that they had heard of via family, friends, or media:

MONA: *"[It is] a scary process. In reality, it depends on the person's purpose though, it depends on the person. Either, either the person who is, the foreigner who wants to look for pen pal will be in trouble or it is the other way around. You never know, because you are talking with human being. You are not talking to make a story [...] "Oh you better be careful!" and people back home say: "MMMmm, better choose the right person and blah blah blah. It is not just for money or whatever [...] I have heard some stories, scary stories about pen pal writing and what not. And I was just thinking: "He is staying with his mom*

in a basement? Oh...what could be in a basement maybe? A jar? Maybe he will keep the head of the girl in it? [laughs] And actually, when I came I could not imagine the layout of the house where he was living. So the first time I came down to the basement I was looking for jars!" [laughs] [...] Yeah, it was in my mind because all these pen pals thing, all these pen pals stories that I have heard: They will take out life insurance on you, they will kill you, and they will put your head in a jar [laughs]."

KITTY: *"Oh yeah. Definitely. My mom always said: "Oh my goodness, that employer of yours, he might just kill you or do something." Because back at home in the Philippines you can see some TV shows, showing about this Filipina girl who is married to maybe an American and there are these stories and it's not really good [...] And I have some problem about that too. It came to my mind that I thought: "Oh?" But I know what I am going to, you know, and God will protect me and take care of me. I don't worry about it. Yeah. But it is just my mom's fear and my father's fear as well. But it didn't happen to me. If I am a bad girl maybe, but if I learn the right things and it is God's will."*

ANNA: *"Sometimes I heard my nephew say, he mentioned to me that: "Maybe you will be like," because there was one actress there that got killed by her husband. And her husband is a Caucasian not from Philippines. And so he said: "Maybe you will be like her when you get there."*

SITSIT: *"When we arrived at his house I thought: "Oh my God, it is very far." I keep on tracing where we go because I thought: "What if I have to escape!?" [Laughs] Have to escape! So it is far, so very far [...] when I was thinking about escaping, I was thinking: "If I had to escape, where will I go? I do not know the road. I said: "Oh my God, it will be very hard." Because I said if there is something wrong between us, maybe he is not good, I said: "I have to get ready." So I have to be aware, if that would happen, I would have to walk far and hitch a ride. But praise the Lord, he is good."*

While these comments acknowledge the intense vulnerability and uncertainty associated with marriage migration relationships, they also serve to demonstrate how each woman made an active choice to participate in marriage migration, despite the risks.

6.2.4 Abuse

As referenced in the comments by the women above, as well as by the predominant discourse in the literature, violence and abuse commonly occur in marriage migration relationships. While many happy and successful relationships exist, the possibility of abuse and violence is much higher within marriage migration relationships because of unrealistic expectations informed by gender ideologies and cultural reproductions, and further compounded

by the sponsorship process (Smith 2006, 6; Merali 2008, 282; Merali 2009, 3). Over the course of our interviews, SVITLANA shared her experiences of domestic violence and sexual abuse at the hands of her new husband, commenting that everything seemed normal during the beginning of their relationship, but that over time, CHRIS became more aggressive, controlling, and possessive:

> **SVITLANA:** *"When he was writing, he was funny. He said he was from a family with five other children and he was always joking that everyone had girls and it was going to be he who had a son. And he said that he liked growing up in a big family and he would like say, "our little boy" he would call my son; you know, he knew what buttons to push. Yeah he was writing like that. "You are going to be my princess." And then when I was already here, he was writing that same stuff to other girls. "When I come to meet you, I will treat you like my princess [...] He treated me like a prostitute. That's what he wanted. So, he would act like; I mean he would say: "Why is it so hard for you to spread your legs for me?" and he would say: "You are controlling, you are controlling your genitals with your emotions." I mean, what can I say? He used to go to prostitutes before, so why would it be any different? [...] He wanted to change everything in my life that I had. Like to the way that he wanted me to be; stay home, don't contradict, and listen to what he want me to do. You know, he wanted that kind of wife. You know, to go and do it [have sex], that kind of thing; without any feelings. But he doesn't try or want to be nice to you. I mean, if he was like that from the beginning it would have been a different situation."*

In addition to his sexually abusive actions, CHRIS also abused his authority and position as a spousal sponsor. As discussed in Chapter Four, sponsorship abuse is commonly associated with marriage migration relationships, due to the privatization of the sponsored person's basic needs, which inherently creates a power imbalance in the relationship and culture of dependency (Smith 2006, 2; Del Vecchio 2007, 1940). As such, sponsorship abuse can be understood as a form of domestic violence, given that:

> Domestic violence [is] not only a form of physical abuse, but also a process of disempowerment ... domestic violence is a feature of a social system structured by gender inequalities and patriarchal systems that operate to maintain inequalities in the division of social power. (Cribb & Barnett 1999, 49, as quoted by Walton-Roberts 2008, 499).

CHRIS' behavior towards SVITLANA is a clear demonstration of domestic violence, given that he restricted her from having equal power and control in the relationship. For instance,

SVITLANA reflected on how CHRIS often used coercion, intimidation, and abusive tactics to

control her:

> **SVITLANA:** *"One of the reasons they want Russian wife is just because they think they will umm, in bed they will do everything they want. They just kind of figure for themselves, you know, that maybe, you know, Canadian women wouldn't take it. But they think you know, Russian, just because; like my husband told me: "You should kiss my ass, I brought you here." So just because, you know, they brought us here, we are to do everything for them [...] It was always about the money, how much he had invested in me. Money here, money over there, for paperwork. It all cost too much money [he said:] "I have invested too much money. Yeah, he said: "If you find a guy, when you find a guy, he has to pay me $30,000 because that is how much I spent. "*

> **CL:** *"And you said that [money] was just for the paperwork and the plane tickets to Canada? "*

> **SVITLANA:** *"For all my expenses, like you know, he would buy groceries and throw them down on the table and say: "There, so you can tell your parents that I feed you. "*

Throughout our conversations, SVITLANA affirmed that CHRIS' severe jealousy and insecurity

were the cause of his abusive behavior; always afraid that SVITLANA would leave him, CHRIS

forbade her from leaving the house unsupervised, making friends, as well as continuously

monitored her activities through the use of a voice recorder in the phone and screening her letters

to her family:

> **SVITLANA:** *"Yeah, and he will not let me use the computer, so I can't send email. I was not to touch it. He was afraid I would open mail that is private, which I wouldn't, but he would always tell me I was not allowed. I mean I am intelligent enough to know when he tells me that I can't touch that I know he is hiding something. "*

> **CL:** *"And so he did say that it was too expensive to make a phone call? "*

> **SVITLANA:** *"Yeah, oh yeah. And so he would tell me: "Write a letter" and he would send it. But he kept them all in file. I look and they were all in memory. He would scan them and then have someone translate them so he could see what I was telling my parents [...] Also, he can tell that somebody picked up the phone, but I don't say anything. And then he, he was thinking and one day he said: "I don't know what you know but you know something because you are different now. But I wasn't different, I was just kind of umm, I was kind of awake. I start thinking: "Is this actually happening? "*

Awakened by this behavior, SVITLANA eventually learned that CHRIS had never applied for

spousal sponsorship and that she and her son were living in Canada illegally. Like MONA,

SITSIT, ANNA, ELENA, and TAMARA, SVITLANA's husband controlled the filing of the

spousal sponsorship paperwork; however, instead of filing the paperwork prior to her arrival,

CHRIS convinced SVITLANA to apply for a visitor's visa and instructed her that he would

complete the paperwork once she arrived. Trusting CHRIS completely, SVITLANA applied for,

and received a three month visitor's visa.

Over time, SVITLANA learned that CHRIS had purposively not filed the spousal

sponsorship paperwork, so that if there was ever an issue between them he could easily have her

deported for overstaying her visa, as he had done with other women whom he met through

international introduction agencies. After months of abuse, SVITLANA sought assistance from

her neighbors to secretly leave CHRIS; immediately, CHRIS contacted the authorities and tried

to have her deported. SVITLANA describes her fear and uncertainty when she finally left

CHRIS in commenting:

> **SVITLANA:** *"I would cry every day. I would go to the neighbor and cry and cry. And then when the Jehovah Witness came, they could tell that I was learning English and they asked where I was from and what I was doing. She brought me bible and gave me phone number of Russian girl, but I couldn't phone her because of the voice recorder. And then one day when they came, I was very, very sick, and they brought me some soup for my throat. And the next day they came and my eyes were just red and I said: "I can't live like this anymore [...] That evening, I was just in my house coat, kind of relaxed because I did not want to give him, you know,"*
>
> **CL:** *"Any reason to be suspicious?"*
>
> **SVITLANA:** *"Yeah, and then I didn't sleep all night, I would just look at the clock and five minutes after one, six minutes, boy was that a long night. So he went to work, but he never told me when he will be coming back. He said he would be back later to get his shoes. So when he left, I said to my son: "Go over to CAROL's." And then CAROL's daughter came who brought a friend with a truck; in the back, we just put our stuff. And then she left and they told me to take another car, because neighbors were watching the whole thing. So I am standing there inside the door and my heart is just jumping up because he can show up any minute. So after we got to CAROL's house, we took her friends' car, because he knows CAROL's car, over to the friends and switched car and went to the [store] and um, because they told me call him from a pay phone. And I told him: "Don't look for us. We left, but we are safe and we will be ok." And then we went to [the woman's shelter]. And my God, I slept that night I think. It was it the same day or*

the next day when the police came? He reported me missing [...] He was writing to embassy, to consulate, to immigration, to Ukrainian embassy, everybody. So everybody heard about me; probably enough! [laughs] He was saying that I used him [...] When I had refugee hearing, the judge, I saved those letters that he wrote to my parents saying that he was going to send the Mafia after them. I am not making it up. [The Judge said] "I can tell that you are not friends from those letters." And because he had sent money he was very mad. My parents were so nice to him. And he felt guilty right. But he was just lying to them."

Although this period of time was the most difficult in her life, SVITLANA states that she has come to terms with the experience and is grateful to now have a happy life and family in Canada. SVITLANA's acceptance of her past was highlighted during our Photovoice discussion, when she quickly identified Figure 6.3 as her favorite image. SVITLANA described that this image symbolized the major point of negotiation in her life, and further commented in her journal entry:

Figure 6.3: SVITLANA "Hope"

SVITLANA: *"Me on the ferry. Looking towards good news and finding stability in my son's and my life. Hoping for a better future. My son and I were going to Vancouver to find out if we are allowed to stay in Canada and become permanent residents. At that point in my life, I didn't have a future. Every day I would wake up and try to enjoy every moment of being here and try to create a lifetime of memories."*

From the above comments, one can recognize that the traumatic events that SVITLANA endured caused her to have feelings of "placelessness" and/or "inbetweenness" given that she was caught between her country of origin and settlement. In being disconnected from both familiar places, SVITLANA was forced to develop new ways or being and belonging, which in turn helped her to reestablish her sense of place and identity in Canada.

While SVITLANA's experience of abuse and sponsorship debt is unique within this study, one is able to understand from comments made by the other participants regarding uncertainty and vulnerability, in conjunction with the literature review in Chapter Four, that mistreatment and abuse are unfortunately all too common in marriage migration relationships. In highlighting SVITLANA's experience, I illustrate the need for the Canadian Government to conduct an intensive review of the spousal sponsorship program, in order to remedy systemic weakness and to identify solutions and/or protective measures that would reduce undue vulnerability in this process.

6.2.5 'Mail Order Brides' & Terminology

At the end of every interview conversation, I would inquire with each woman about her preference of what terminology to use to describe her marriage migration experience. In keeping with my argument outlined in Chapter Four, I informed the women that I did not feel comfortable using the term 'mail order bride', due to its strong negative connotations and had instead chosen to use the more neutral term 'foreign bride'. In doing so, I explained that this research was aimed at recognizing the full range of experiences encountered within marriage migration relationships. In agreement, many of the women objected to the use of the term 'mail order bride' because they associated that term with marriages of convenience and/or negative and abusive situations.

For example MONA, KITTY, and ANNA explained that 'mail order bride' did not fit their experience in stating:

MONA: *"No! I do not. I did not really because it is kind of, for me it is too degrading because my purpose was not the same as those 'mail order brides'. Yeah, so, I would, I would be happy if you will like mention that [...] I find the way we did it with our kind of writing, it was kind of more intimate than in the Internet because you are so exposed in the Internet. Other than just writing there is the effort and the excitement. You wonder what to say and stuff like that. I would always look through the dictionary and stuff. And I would always have a draft and look it over to see if I am writing the same English, am I doing the right spelling? And my husband too. He is trying to write legibly so that I can read it [...] That is why I don't really agree with the bride order thing. And I don't categorize myself in there. Because we put our heart in it actually; it was not just a game. It was not just because of money. It was not just because I want to come over and I want to escape from a problem in the Philippines and come over and find a wealthy guy to stay with. It wasn't that way."*

KITTY: *"It feels like [pause] I am ordering in from the Sears catalogue. 'Mail order bride'. Something like, because you don't have a foundation there; everything you know, you just kind of flipping around in a magazine: "Ok, I want this, I want that" and you really don't have a connection. No connection at all. No communication or something like that. But in my case or whatever happened to me, I don't feel like that. It doesn't describe it."*

ANNA, TAMARA, and SVITLANA also disagreed with the use of 'mail order bride' and affirmed that they were comfortable with the term foreign bride:

CL: *"I was wondering if there was a term that you feel comfortable using to describe your experience of marriage and migration? I know that certainly some of these terms absolutely do not describe your experience, but I am wondering how you feel about them? Like Internet bride; how do you feel about that term? Because you met your husband on the Internet?"*

ANNA: *"No."*

CL: *"No, that doesn't fit. I don't agree with the term 'mail order bride', but some people do use it..."*

ANNA: *"No."*

CL: *"I have used the term foreign bride in my thesis because I felt that it was more open to a broader range of experience. You don't have to choose that either, but I am interested to know what you think about that term?"*

ANNA: *"Foreign bride?"*

CL: *"Yes that you are a bride who came to Canada because you married a Canadian?"*

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ANNA: *"Yeah maybe."*

TAMARA: **"[Mail-order bride]** *it doesn't upset me. It is obsolete. It is a term that is not in use anymore. I think it is not, I think it should be Internet umm, dating, but not dating because you are married. Internet communication? Internet relationship? It is more applicable. I would say long distance?"*

CL: *"How do you feel about the term foreign bride?"*

TAMARA: *"Foreign? Foreign? Foreign umm... foreign bride? Yeah, fine."*

SVITLANA: *"It is ok. It doesn't matter for me. I mean if that is kind of what it is."*

CL: *"But you don't find the term offensive or derogatory or anything like that? What about foreign bride?"*

SVITLANA: *"No, not offensive [...] Foreign Bride, yeah. It even sounds a little less, like, harsh, like instead of 'mail order bride' [...] Sure. It doesn't matter. Whatever makes people understand more. If it has to be 'mail order bride' it doesn't matter. It doesn't hurt my ears. I mean it is what it is. Actually, it is who we are. [laughs] But it doesn't matter."*

In contrast, ELENA and SITSIT believed that the term foreign bride seemed too close to 'mail order bride':

ELENA: *"I don't know. I do kind of, don't like foreign bride just because it sounds too much like you are going in a store and are buying yourself a bride."*

CL: *Ok, so you would agree then that 'mail order bride' is a derogatory term?*

ELENA: *"Yeah!"*

CL: *"Is there anything else that you can think of that might fit?"*

ELENA: *"No, I don't know. I guess foreign bride fits, it just doesn't sound very nice [laughs]."*

SITSIT: *"It is not foreign bride. I think what you can call it? Foreign bride, it's like, it's like you were importing. [laughs] For me, it is like importing."*

CL: *"So you don't think that it is an appropriate term? Do you find that it is derogatory?"*

SITSIT: *"No, it is not derogatory, for me. Foreign bride, I don't know [...] Maybe I would say love life? [laughs]*

Although here was debate over the appropriateness and applicability of this term, all of the women consented to the use of the term foreign bride to describe their experiences of marriage and migration. While this discussion may seem disconnected from the overall focus of the

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research findings, I feel as though it contextualizes the women's renegotiation of their identity within an often misrepresented and misunderstood practice. In drawing boundaries between their experience of marriage and migration and their understanding of 'mail order bride' relationships, the women reinforce their agency in the choice to marry, migrate, as well as in their active role in the reestablishment of sense of self and belonging. Thus, in highlighting discussion around motivations, ideologies, stereotypes, uncertainty, vulnerability and abuse, one is able to recognize how the marital relationship is one of, if not the most important, point of negotiation and as such, attributes the greatest influence within the (re)establishment of place and identity.

6.3 Family Dynamics

While one can appreciate that the process of migration would have a significant effect on an individual's sense of place and identity due to the scope and scale of the transition, it becomes increasingly apparent that adding a new marriage and other familial dynamics further intensifies this renegotiation. Beyond the marital relationship, a woman's experience within her new family pushes her to assume new roles, such as mother, step-parent, caretaker, as well as live within established family dynamics (Emery & Dillion 1994; 374; Walton-Roberts 2008, 503). Interestingly, this type of familial negotiation is not addressed in the marriage migration literature, as the familial context only enters discussion in order to touch on the motivation some women feel to support their families though remittances. Yet time after time, family surfaced as a central point of negotiation within the women's conversations about their reestablishment of place and identity in new environments.

6.3.1 Becoming a Wife, Mother, and Raising Multicultural Families

For MONA, KITTY, and ANNA, their new life in Canada enabled them to accomplish their goal of becoming mothers and having families. While all of the women describe that having a family was one of the most fulfilling aspects of their life, some also commented on how

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challenging it was to balance a new marriage, motherhood, and the blending of cultures within a family all at once.

As the mother of an active toddler, ANNA often discussed how her new role refocused the way she perceives the world, reshaped her identity, and helped her to establish a greater sense of place in her new environment. Correspondingly, the majority of ANNA's photographs depicted her new family lifestyle in Canada. When asked if there was a particular image which captured her feelings of her new life, ANNA selected a photograph (Figure 6.4) of herself holding her son's hand because she explained that it demonstrates both the joys and challenges she faces in building her own family in Canada.

Figure 6.4: ANNA "Motherhood"

Moreover, ANNA's discussion highlights how her new situated knowledge as a mother informs her identity renegotiation in a new environment, the given that identities are always in a state of becoming. Her journal entry describes:

> **ANNA:** *"Aside from being married, giving birth to my very own flesh and blood has been an extreme importance in my life. He gave me more meaning being a woman and a wife. His presence made us complete as a family. Above all, I was so thankful to God for providing us a son that is so precious and innocent to take good care of. [My son] is*

worthwhile of all the labor pains and the nine months of waiting. I can remember that, although, it was really hard for me being so far away from my family in the Philippines for the reason that, I don't have anybody to turn to or talk with or even help me rub my back while I was in labor. It was only my husband who was there beside me. In my home country, usually in my situation there should be a group or company of family or relatives around to support you and even try to help you to push, just to make you feel like they are always there for you."

Additionally, ANNA speaks about how her negotiation of her family roles across transnational social space effects the establishment of her sense of place, identity, and rootedness in her new environment:

CL: *"Does Canada feel like home to you or do you still recognize the Philippines to be home? Or, is it both places?"*

ANNA: *"Both. Yeah. Philippines have my family there, my relatives. Here, just my own family."*

CL: *"So do you ever feel sort of torn between the two places, that one foot is here in Canada and the other is in the Philippines; or that your body is here in Canada and your heart is in the Philippines?"*

ANNA: *"Yeah, yeah. Yes like that. Because I still really miss the bonding there in my community. Because we try going out here, just me and my husband, my son, it's lonely just us."*

CL: *"So you miss the bonding?"*

ANNA: *"Yeah."*

In sharing about her challenges of raising a family so far away from her own family, ANNA highlights the transformative nature of this personal negotiation. While the establishment of her own family in Canada has certainly fulfilled one of her primary aspirations, it is apparent within our conversations that ANNA continues to long for the support of her family in the Philippines and the opportunity to engage familiar cultural practices.

Similarly to ANNA, MONA discusses difficulty negotiating the role of wife and mother within a multicultural family. Throughout our conversations, MONA described instances in which she would try to incorporate both cultures into the family, but often would comment that she was not able to achieve balance:

MONA: *"My kids are not so exposed to the Filipinos and some will say: "Who is that? Who is that girl who come with you that time?" [And I say:] "That was my younger daughter." [They say:] "Oh really? She was so beautiful and la la la." And they say: "Oh, your kids are really, really, they are not like Filipino." I said: "No. [Laughs] They are half, half. [Laughs] what can I do? I can't tell them anymore what to do when they are in the Filipino community. I can't because this is Canada. So that is kind of expectation. And, and some understand. And some will say: "Mmm, they are just so aristocratic and they are so indifferent. Blah blah blah." I said: "Oh well. I accept that, but what can I do? [...] We just had a family, a family meeting before my Daughter left [for college]. We were kind of having a problem and tensions were rising because of her going away and stuff like that and they were saying: "Oh mom! You cannot force us to go here to your Filipino parties." And I said: "Yeah, and I am feeling so alone and I am feeling that I have no family because you never go with me." They said: "Mom, they are not our friends." I said: "No, but you are my family though, you can make friends." They said: "I know that you are very sociable mom, but we are not.[...] Yeah, so I feel sad that they don't come with me when I have Filipino things."*

CL: *"So do you feel, when they don't want to be a part of that, does it take away from your Filipino identity here in Canada?"*

MONA: *"Yeah, yeah, it does. In a way too, I understand; well it's ok. I mean I cannot say much. But, but I have the freedom though, they will say: "It is ok mom." Just as I said, my daughter said: "You are very sociable, we are not." [laughs] So I was kind of: "Oh. What have I made? What have we made?" and they will say: "You are sociable and I am not. But now that you have a mind of your own, I cannot be teaching you to be sociable. You refuse to. So what can I do?"*

Similarly to ANNA, MONA's photograph (Figure 6.5) and comments illustrate how her identity is in a perpetual state of becoming, as she learns to negotiate her old and new ways of being and belonging. While raising a multicultural family is a central negotiation within MONA's life, her photographs and corresponding journal entries demonstrate her love and dedication to her family. For instance, MONA shared an image during our Photovoice discussions which illustrates a happy memory of her family spending time together, doing an activity that they all enjoy. MONA comments:
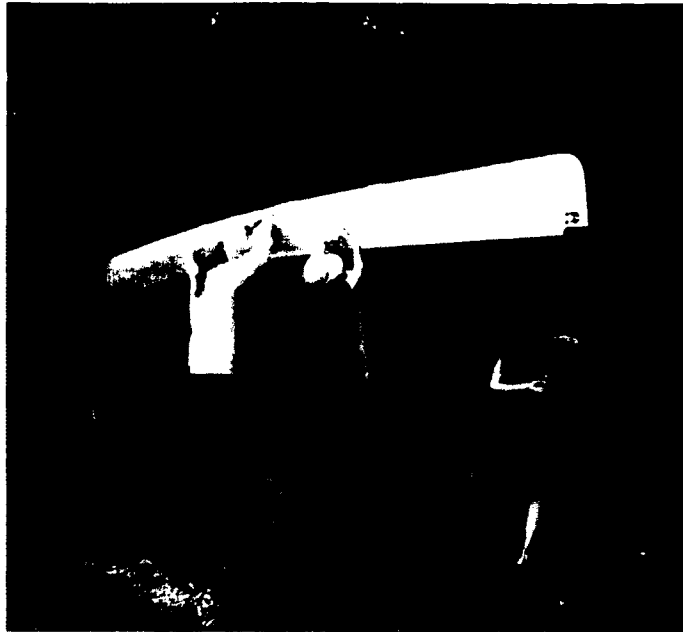
Figure 6.5: MONA "Multicultural Family"

MONA: *"These pictures are IMPORTANT because this is who I am and this will be my legacy to my family, especially my two girls. I took these pictures because I want them to look back on how it is to be a family of multicultural parents. That family is the foundation of all of my reasons to be here."*

During our conversations, KITTY identified many of the same feelings as ANNA and MONA, commenting her new role as a step-parent within a blended family was a central point of negotiation in her life:

KITTY: *"To be honest, it is hard, kind of tough for me because we all have different cultures and different ways of raising our kids, the way we want it, even if I want to, it happen it is not happening which is kind of hard. Try to balance and have understanding [...] Blending. I think that my husband is, really does a good job you know, and I was surprised that I am not like him and he is not really disciplining the kids. But of course, a mom, it is kind of hard to do that. So I feel like: "Oh, it's just so hard." But I feel like he is doing a good job raising our kids. Also, Filipino way is similar to the way that we are raising the kids [...] In blended family you really have to balance your time, your emotions will be like a rollercoaster, emotions if you have a blended family. You raise kids that doesn't come from you but it doesn't work the way you want it. And it is really tough emotionally, it is really tough. And you need a lot of patience."*

6.3.2.2 Caretakers

In addition to their roles as wife and mother, KITTY and MONA also assumed the role of

caretaker within their family. For KITTY, her caretaker role began when she first immigrated to

Canada within the Live-in Caregiver Program as a nanny for MIKE's two young sons. However,

once their relationship became romantic, KITTY was forced to negotiate her private and

professional roles. Kitty speaks of this challenge when she describes:

> **KITTY:** *"For me, my perspective: "Oh, I am the nanny and now I was a nanny and now I am the mother. So, how will I incorporate everything into that?" they might think that I am bad because I'm a step-mom but still I want for them to grow up the way I want with discipline and everything, but they don't want to take it. I think, because they were young of course, they think: "Oh, that is not the way grandma do it for us, that is not the way. So I still kind of [pause]."*

> **CL:** *"It is hard to switch roles, like you sort of said,"*

> **KITTY:** *"Feel like kind of neg, how do you call it? Neglected? Or kind of feel it's not for what I want. But then, because I want to be tough, I want to tell them, they are boys and telling boys is kind of tough because they grew up in their grandparents [...] I don't know, when they were growing up they have rules; that's what's in their minds but now, you have a house, your dad and I are your parents now, so I have a set of rules too. Yeah. And it was hard for me. Emotionally, a roller coaster."*

In MONA's case, she had never planned to assume a caretaker role. Yet, when she arrived in

Canada, her husband RAY asked her to become a caregiver for his chronically ill mother.

During our discussion, Mona utilized this photograph (Figure 6.7) as a way of speaking about the

uncertainty she experience assuming this role and the effect that is had on her relationship:

Figure 6.6: MONA "Mom"

MONA: *"Actually it was my first responsibility because my husband used to travel to work every month, so when I didn't have the kid, I have Mom to look after. I said: "Oh lord! What a responsibility! [...] My mother-in-law and me was not getting along after a month because she realized that she was kind of jealous, kind of thing. Because [my husband] was living with her for quite a while before and was her caregiver. "*

In assuming the role as caregiver, Mona's relationship with her husband and her mother-in-law was strained. Yet, over time, as the picture above demonstrates, both she and her mother in law MONA became more comfortable with her new role.

6.3.2 Step-Parents & Blended Families

As mentioned above, jealousy regarding time and attention was also a prominent theme in many conversations with women who either married a man who had children from a previous relationship, or who had children of her own. Among the participants, four of the seven husbands were previously married and/or had children from a past relationship. Additionally, SVITLANA, ELENA, and SITSIT migrated with children from a previous marriage or relationship.

Emery and Dillion (1994, 374) describe that because "divorce is not a single event but a process of change that can extend over long periods of time" that one must continually (re)negotiate power dynamics, intimacy, and boundaries within the divorced family system. In

establishing a blended family, KITTY, SVITLANA, and ELENA, all struggled with the new role of step-parent and found the blended family dynamic to be one of the most challenging points of negotiation in their experience of settlement and integration. For instance, TAMARA identified that it was a difficult adjustment for her step-children to accept of her relationship with their father, given that RICK had lived without a spouse or romantic partner since his separation with their mother:

> **TAMARA:** *"RICK, he has two children. And when I came they were twelve and thirteen. And they were quiet. They knew I was coming right, and everything; but, I was hard because they have their own Mom. And umm, I think it was more hurtful for them...I mean, it was the first time he brought a woman to the house [...] they divorced when the girl was six months and the boy was two years, so it was a long time, more than ten years he was alone. So it was hard for them."*

While TAMARA did not expand beyond this comment regarding the difficulties she experienced with her step-children, it was apparent that her negotiation to fit into an existing family was challenging and had a significant impact on her sense place and of belonging when she first arrived in Canada.

Similar to TAMARA, my conversations with ELENA often touched on difficult experiences with her new step-daughter when she first arrived in northern BC. ELENA shared how the strained relationship between herself and her step-daughter greatly affected her adjustment to her new life and environment:

> **CL:** *"So, it sounds like even when you moved to Prince George, that you had a lot of support from your husband's family and..."*
>
> **ELENA:** *"I did, yes, I did. I had only one tough time [pause] which I don't know if, I don't know [if I want to talk about]. It's a very, touchy subject for me and my husband. He has a daughter, he is older is older than me, right? Thirteen years older. He has a daughter, who he raised by himself. So, he meant so much to her that she, she, she kind of, she is very nice girl, but I think she didn't want me to, to come into their life. She didn't want to lose her dad in a way, so she was fighting for him. And, she had bad experience with her boyfriend, so when she needed [attention from her dad]. And he started paying attention to her a lot, and I was at home by myself [...] being here, I lost all, all everything, like I lost everything even like, everything, like all my foundational, my family. STEVE meant, like, he was my*

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Canada, he was all my life[...] I realized that, I was crying a lot. You know, it was very big subject. I knew she wasn't really happy for me to be here and stuff, so umm, we went through a lot of talking and tears and all that stuff [...] he was saying that I am jealous. Maybe I was in a way, I needed him a lot. So, I had nervous breakdown. And I lost lots of weight. And I was crying a lot. Everybody was thinking that I didn't have any reason. Plus, I didn't tell anybody, I was keeping it to myself. And after that, I went on anti-depressants, and they helped me a lot. Because, till that point, I didn't have reason to cry and I was crying. It was just ridiculous. And his daughter, she also realized that she wanted her dad to be happy and that I am not an enemy and I am not taking him, like stealing forever or anything. So, that was, that was a very difficult part to deal with, in my experience. But it is very touchy, even now, [my husband and I] prefer to not talk about it."

ELENA's feelings of exclusion caused her severe mental distress, greatly affected her relationship with family and husband, as well as inhibited her ability to develop a sense of place and identity within her new environment. Whiteside (1989, 34) agrees that it is essential for remarried or blended families to create cohesion through "everyday patterned interactions, family traditions, and family celebrations" in order to create a family identity. In experiencing issues with power dynamics, jealousy and exclusion, it is understandable that ELENA struggled to be confident and independent, without having an established identity or sense of place in Canada.

In a similar situation, SVITLANA described how CHRIS was jealous of the attention she afforded her young son ALEX when they first moved to Canada and how he manipulated access to basic necessities in order to receive the type of attention he was interested in:

SVITLANA: *"He asked me when I got here: "Where is the card?" and he took it away from me. I had no money. He was paying everywhere and I said: "I feel so embarrassed. Nothing from him, ever, ever. No dollar from his hand."*

CL: *"So that must have made you feel very vulnerable then, because you had no money to buy things for your son if you needed them. Or you couldn't go anywhere on your own, you were dependent, like you had to be tied to him because of that?"*

SVITLANA: *"Yeah. And he would tell me: "You have to go show me love and then we will talk about shoes for your son." [I said] "Show me love? How can I show you love?" He told me: "Our boy," And I would talk to my son that: "That this is our home. We were a family now and we were going to live here." And then after that, I am trying to tell my son: "Ok, now we are going to be here and this house is going to be our home." He said:*

"Mom, are we not going to look for Dad anymore?" You know, it just breaks you. Yeah, when I came [CHRIS'] friend had said: "Oh, he will be number one." My son. And I was like: "Yeah, he is six years old." You know at home, we sleep in the same bed and at home we just have two rooms right? And here I sleep with another man in a different room. He has his own room in a big house. He is scared, he comes to the room every night; he is crying."

CL: *"So [CHRIS] was jealous of the attention that you paid to your son?"*

SVITLANA: *"Yeah."*

Following her separation from CHRIS and the resolution of her immigration issues, SVITLANA

began a new relationship with another man living in northern BC, whom she had met through

mutual friends. Once SVITLANA and TOM's relationship became serious and they were

married, SVITLANA encountered further difficulty because her son and her new step-son had a

hard time getting along. She explains:

SVITLANA: *"It isn't easy."*

CL: *"The integration into the family wasn't easy?"*

SVITLANA: *"Yeah no. He [my step-son] was very jealous because of his dad. And he would make hard time for my son; he is two years older. It was really hard. [...] For a long time it was just him and Dad. And then here is this woman with a child. And I told him: "Your dad could have met another woman who could have had two kids who were older than you and give you hard time. You know, you should feel lucky that you got a little brother who is just happy to be around you. But now he is older and it is better. Now he has a job and loves his school and he is talking more now."*

Although TAMARA and SITSIT also married men with children from previous relationships,

their experience was much different that ELENA's and SVITLANA's because their step-

children were older and had already moved out of the family home to start their own lives.

6.4 Conclusion

Through the discussion provided above, one is able to understand that marital and

familial relationships serve as a central point of negotiation within foreign brides' transition to

new environments, and as such, have greatly influenced their reestablishment of place and

identity. Comments, journal entries and photographs, combine to create a narrative of negotiation

which highlights how situated knowledges are developed globally, locally, and individually through experiences of marriage and migration, as well as through experiences of inclusion and exclusion in the private sphere. Furthermore, experiences of place and identity fragmentation, dislocation, and/or "inbetweenness", enable foreign brides to create new spaces or "translocalities", wherein the development of new ways of being and belonging allow for the reestablishment of self, belonging, agency and independence.

Chapter 7 : Public Negotiations: Exploration of Local and Transnational Landscapes

7.1 Introduction: Situating the Importance of "Weak Ties"

In moving beyond the marital relationship and family dynamics, the following chapter explores how the women's settlement and integration in to broader social settings influenced the development of their sense of place and identity. However, given that every individual's experiences are unique, it is challenging to pin point a specific location or public interaction in which to analyze negotiations. Therefore, I explore the range of social networks and ties discussed by the participants in order to highlight central points of negotiation within their settlement an integration experiences.

Walton-Roberts (2008, 499-500) affirms the importance of understanding "intersections and continuums, rather than [public and private] binary oppositions" within migrants' lives, given that this approach allows for a greater understanding of social and spatial inclusion/exclusion, gendered identities, and social processes, as well as for the examination of power across global–local scales. Thus, instead of studying specific scales or locations, Walton-Roberts (2008, 500) suggests the examination of experiences within social networks for the prevalence of "strong ties" and "weak ties"; "strong ties" represented by ethnic kinship and familial connections, whereas "weak ties" include broader social interactions within the community.

While "strong ties" play an essential role within the settlement and integration process, as demonstrated in Chapter Six, "weak ties" are also imperative to the success of the migration process because they provide access to new information and exposure to new ways of being (Walton-Roberts 2008, 500). Accordingly, Walton-Roberts (2008-5000) concludes that the ability to develop both "strong ties" and "weak ties", and by establishing support networks

through these ties, to have a "smoother" settlement experience. Consequently, by recognizing the importance of the spatial and social connections across transnational space, I am able to highlight some central points of negotiation within the women's lives.

7.2 Reestablishing Independency & Agency

The women's discussion of everyday experiences highlighted several points of personal negotiation that occurred as a result of developing "weak ties", and correspondingly, discussed how these interactions shaped their perceptions of agency and independence. While achieving language proficiency, driving skills, and establishing employment and education opportunities may seem like commonplace, routine activities, the women describe the relearning and/or reintegration of these processes as challenging negotiations in a new environment.

7.2.1 Language Proficiency

The ability to effectively communicate is essential to an individual's happiness, ability to feel included, as well as their capacity to establish interactions and experiences which would enable the reestablishment of sense of place and identity. While all of the women had some proficiency in English prior to immigrating, many struggled with language once they arrived in Canada. As a result of their perceived or actual language barriers, some women described feelings of isolation, dependence, and a loss of confidence. TAMARA contextualizes the difficulty she experienced integrating into the community and developing connections beyond her familial relationships as a result of her language skills, when she comments:

> **TAMARA:** *"Independence. When I arrived, I felt like princess in the castle right? But independence for me it was hard, a struggle. I figured out what was hard for me, when I would go outside people would not understand me [...] Some people are very warm and some people very cold. Some people would smile but you could see them laugh behind. Every community has groups, but especially in a small place: Rotary and Ducks, and so on. Some people are just rude and mean, usually it is just women. They will stand in front of you in a group and I would try to be conversational but, there could be three of five of them and the lady would talk to four of the other persons and say: "What she said?" Very rude! And: "What? Now, talk to me in English what you said?" It is frustrating but I have*

dream to live here and somebody is not going to ruin it. I will cover my ears. Just because [my voice] is high pitch, she misunderstood about me and I think it is very rude. You have name. I am not "she", I have name."

Moreover, TAMARA identified that although she was not afraid to speak in English, that she and RICK did not have good communication in their relationship because he had difficulty understanding her:

> **TAMARA:** *"I was just talking, speaking English like I was drumming on a drum. If people don't understand me, I don't feel ashamed. I had several friends that I met through my English instructor who were interested in speaking with me. But I will say it, I had lack of communication. I couldn't speak with him, my husband about many subjects which was really hard for me. Because he doesn't understand, he doesn't even know what I could tell him. How many times I would start talking to him and he was not interested because it difficult. We stopped talking, our conversations. I won't talk to him."*

As a result of the breakdown of communication in their relationship, TAMARA and RICK separated after a year of marriage. Given that their separation was amicable and that she and RICK remain good friends, TAMARA describes this time in her life positively and summarized their relationship status in saying: "It is better to have bad peace than good war".

While TAMARA was able to remain confident about her language skills regardless of negative experiences, ELENA commented on how her limited language skills isolated her by complicating even the simplest of tasks. Moreover, because ELENA and STEVE first settled in a remote community within northern BC, where no language services available, she had to depend on her family and electronic sources to establish her skills:

> **ELENA:** *"[My husband's family] helped me go to get groceries and show me what's what, because you know even if I knew English, for example I need sugar, well I would come in the store and all that I see is you know, Rogers, big letters. What is it? I cannot see the word sugar, so I needed somebody's help for me first times to do groceries. I started learn to get ready for driving test on the computer; I started read the book. I was watching TV a lot, any news, you know, to get used to fluent speech because my husband was trying to talk too slow to me so that I could understand. But for example, other people, they have no idea right? So they speak fast and with words that I do not know. So I had hard time to understand fluent English."*

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Because of her language limitations, ELENA described becoming more introverted and dependent, which lead to her nervous breakdown. However, ELENA described that her Husband's patience and willingness to work on their relationship to enable her to build her proficiency and confidence over time. What is more, when STEVE lost his job due to a mill closure, the family relocated to a larger centre in northern BC so that ELENA would to be able to access language and educational resources that would better facilitate her settlement. Figure 7.1 was one of the photographs selected by ELENA to share, given that it demonstrates her independence now that she has moved to a larger centre and has been able to get her driver's license.

Figure 7.1: ELENA "Independence"

The development of "weak ties", in conjunction with her strong family ties, enabled ELENA to develop a renewed sense of independence and agency and ultimately strengthened her settlement experience.

ELENA: *"It was tough to get used to change. And umm, you know I couldn't, I was basically, how to explain it, cannot use all, all what Canada can offer. Staying home, trying to learn language and you know all that stuff, so it's changed only for the best. I started feel it now, just, just with me, you know, getting my license and finding job and I started feel that I'm home. At first it definitely didn't feel like home and it was tough I was homesick and all that stuff. Now I feel like I am home."*

In my conversations with ANNA, she highlighted how communication with DAVE is challenging due to her limited language skills and cultural differences, and in turn, how this has shaped the (re)establishment of her sense of place and identity in Canada:

ANNA: *"I have changed. I am kind of tame here."*

CL: *"Tame?"*

ANNA: *"Yeah."*

CL: *"How so, can you tell me a little bit more about that? What would you not do here that you would in the Philippines?"*

ANNA: *"Especially, like how to communicate. I am kind of like: "Oh," I just say: "Yes or no, ok" like that. But back at home I can talk my language."*

CL: *"And so you can be more opinionated?"*

ANNA: *"Yes. [...] Yes. The way, the way, I don't know how to say it, maybe just like ways of communication. Yes, sometimes we have misunderstandings, or sometimes I don't understand, or sometimes some, like, maybe they are straightforward and they talk what they feel right away and we don't do that. Cause we don't want to hurt the feelings of other people. But here you just talk and you don't know how the person is taking the message."*

Moreover, ANNA explains that her struggle to effectively communicate with her husband has affected her mobility, agency and decision making capacity, as she does not feel like she can be independent in Canada:

ANNA: *"I miss my family, my friends, and the lifestyle that I have there. I was free; I could go around [pause]."*

CL: *"Sort of independence too?"*

ANNA: *"Yeah. Cause here, I have, I don't know, it's not that, I can't go right away."*

CL: *"And now too, instead of just making a decision yourself, you make decisions with your husband as well."*

ANNA: *"Yeah. Yeah that's hard."*

CL: *"Do you attend church in Fort St. John?"*

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ANNA: *"Yes, the Presbyterian church; although I mentioned to my husband a long time ago I want to do, more like, to go to another church. My church in the Philippines is like kind of big church, and it is not just you go there and you sit and listen; you participate and it is lively. Not just sit there and then go home. And I wanted also my son to have like bible studies and actually I suggested that we go to an alliance church. It actually just the opposite side of the building, but he said no, we can't go. Cause his brother is also a member there, that's why."*

Although ANNA did not explicitly talk about a power imbalance in her relationship with her husband DAVE, her comments about her lack of independence and decision making underscore her ongoing negotiation, which has significantly shaped her sense of self, identity, and place in Canada. In an effort to regain her independence, ANNA attends conversational English classes at the Literacy Society in her community and hopes that by improving her proficiency that she will be able to successfully pass the Canadian Registered Nursing Equivalency Exam and rejoin the workforce. Thus, the establishment of "weak ties" outside of her home enable ANNA to reconnect with a part of herself and renegotiate new ways of being and belonging in her new environment.

While TAMARA's, ELENA's, and ANNA's comments highlight how language proficiency greatly shaped their settlement and integration experiences and influenced the negotiation of their sense of place and identity, SVITLANA's experience emphasizes the critical nature of language to one's health, safety, and wellbeing. As previously mentioned, SVITLANA was involved in an abusive relationship when she first arrived in Canada. As part of his abusive and controlling tactics, CHRIS denied SVITLANA opportunities to learn and/or improve her language skills. In isolating SVITLANA in this manner and ensuring that she did not build ties outside of their relationship, CHRIS was able to maintain complete control over her and place her in an extremely vulnerable situation. SVITLANA explains her situation by commenting:

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SVITLANA: *"I was kind of learning by speaking but when we end up in immigration one day, at IMSS, then this lady, she said: "Oh, we have free language classes." And CHRIS was like: "OH! She already speaks too much!" and he didn't want me to speak."*

CL: *"So he told you not to take these classes then?"*

SVITLANA: *"No, I wasn't allowed. He didn't want me to end up in that place because they offer so much help."*

CL: *"No, by the sounds of things, and what you have told me before, he wanted to control you as much as possible?"*

SVITLANA: *"Um hum, yes. And he doesn't want you too smart; because if you can speak you can get out somehow. He would tell me: "Oh, why are they looking at you? They are all losers. They are looking but they can't go and get one [a foreign bride]." And I am thinking like: "Why would they need to go and get one?" So he was always telling me like, he would say, like he was trying to tell me that: "Oh, they are looking" and he was jealous of that, you know, that I might leave him for someone else."*

Moreover, the vulnerability associated with SVITLANA's limited language capability was further emphasized when she dealt with immigration officials following her separation from CHRIS. Because SVITLANA could not proficiently read, write, and/or speak English, she could not understand her rights and was nearly deported. SVITLANA explains receiving a visit from an immigration representative at the women's shelter, who requested her signature on a document:

SVITLANA: *"He took my passport and all my documents. He held us there for three hours without like even five minute break. He ask everything, everything! So I start crying. I mean it was so much stress. He said: "Ok, now it's all emotion. How are you planning to stay? What you going to do?" And I said: "My friends. They said that they would sponsor me. And I still have two months left on my visa." And so he went and he bring me that paper and he make me sign; with our pictures there already, like my son. And I look at her [a representative of the local MLA's office] and she can't say nothing. And I don't know what to do? I just took some time and I don't understand anything that was said on that paper. They should have provided me [with a translator]. I mean, it was my second language and I am just learning. They are immigration officer and they can decide. And I ask him: "What is it?" and he said: "This paper, when you are going to leave Canada, you give it to the airport." How he was lying! He said that: "You give it to them when you leave. So they know you left." Holy moly. But then I was reading: "deportation" which is a very similar word in Russian. And I was thinking and I said: "How about I will come, like a few days before when it is time for me to leave and I will sign these papers. I don't feel comfortable signing them right now." When we got out the door she said: "Thank God! Good for you! It was deportation." She was so angry when we got back to the office. She start writing and wrote that letter all night."*

SVITLANA's experiences of violence and abuse highlight the importance of establishing "weak ties", as without them she may not have been able to successfully negotiate assistance for herself and her son during their greatest time in need.

7.2.2 Education & Employment

An individual's education plays a large role in their positionality, given that the process of learning opens up new ways of understanding, and as such, ways of being and belonging. As mentioned above, all of the women who participated in this research had received post-secondary educations; however, all of the women required upgrading/further education to continue a career in their field because their credentials were not recognized in Canada. For SITSIT, MONA, and SVITLANA, the transition from a professional career to entry level positions in Canada served as a central point of negotiation in their lives; in assuming new roles in the employment sector, the women were placed in situations where they were required to renegotiate their self, place, and identity.

For instance, during our conversations SITSIT was always very proud to share information about her education, repeatedly recalling detailed stories about completing her Master's degree in Public Administration and discussing research methods for her Master of Library Science degree. As a widowed mother of four, one can only imagine the challenge and sacrifice that SITSIT must have endured in order to achieve her credentials. Moreover, throughout the pursuit of her education, SITSIT owned and operated several small businesses, such as a meat wholesaling company, a travel agency, and an Internet café, in addition to working as a secretary within a government office for 32 years. However, once SITSIT immigrated to Canada she learned that her credentials would not be recognized and her vast professional and business experience was not transferable. Therefore, SITSIT was forced to seek employment within fast

food restaurants and was hired in several entry level positions. As such, SITSIT discusses how this employment transition has been an abrupt change in her life and has shaped her outlook on how she wants to live her life in Canada. She comments:

> **SITSIT:** *"I am not used to not moving fast, because for so many years, 32 years in the Philippine government I worked hard. And now I move slowly [pause], now yeah."*
>
> **CL:** *"Well and that is a big change for you as well, going from working in an office environment to working in restaurants?"*
>
> **SITSIT:** *"You feel, it is like, self-pity for you. You are in the office and you are used to that and then you go do restaurant [pause] it is like an abrupt change. My husband, my husband can afford for me to stay without me having to work, but I am not used to that. It is my own, my desire. Because I am not used to open you pants and ask money. I don't like that. I want my own. I said that I am still young, why depend on him? I am still useful, still normal. I look at job descriptions here on the Internet for higher positions, I read the description and think: "I can do that. I can" and I apply and they will not consider me. Maybe it is my age, maybe it is my speech, my pronunciation."*

While her experiences in entry level positions were difficult, Figure 7.2 depicts a happier moment when SITSIT was employed at a local fast-food chain.

Figure 7.2: SITSIT "Employment"

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Throughout our conversations, SITSIT maintained that her intent on coming to Canada was for the opportunity to find happiness in her new life; while SITSIT was able to find love with FRANK, she was not satisfied being unemployed and living in a small, rural community, so she choose to move away from FRANK in order to live in a larger centre and seek her financial independence. SITSIT describes that she visits FRANK on weekends and aspires to one day open her own business, once her credentials are recognized.

Similarly to SITSIT, SVITLANA struggled to come to terms with her limited employability after immigrating to Canada. Following her difficult separation from CHRIS, SVITLANA had to obtain employment in order to provide for herself and her young son ALEX. However, SVITLANA was also forced to look for entry level employment because her engineering credentials were not transferable, and engaging in the credential recognition processes or retraining would have placed greater strain on her already stressful situation. In the beginning, SVITLANA worked at a fast food restaurant, as well as a hotel and a care facility. SVITLANA explained that this transition was difficult for her in the beginning, but that she was grateful to have to opportunity to be independent, to learn, and to meet new people:

> **SVITLANA:** *"It was a hard job, but every job I learn something. Here you learn. Like you live life, but you learn, you get experience. In Russia, I just talked to my friend and there, there is no jobs, for young girls they can only get married; like you know, marry somebody who can take care of them. Really sad. There is no life for them to become a better person. Like every job here I met good people and friends [...] Before my Husband now, I didn't drive, I had a bicycle. And we would ride our bike to the mall and I would have a job and I could spend money. You know, he wouldn't take it away from me. yeah, when I come home, I feel that sense of freedom."*
>
> **CL:** *"Independence."*
>
> **SVITLANA:** *"Yeah, I can do something with my life and I am not going to be yelled at."*

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In seeking employment, and eventually, upgrading her skills by taking language courses at IMSS, SVITLANA began rebuilding her confidence, sense of self, and identity as an independent woman. Accordingly, SVITLANA submitted personal photographs for discussion which illustrate the contentment she felt after having the opportunity to take language classes and other upgrading courses at IMSS (Figure 7.3).

Figure 7.3: SVITLANA "Classes at IMSS"

The positive validation that SVITLANA received through her engagement in different types of employment enabled her to strengthen the social ties and assisted her in permanently settling in northern BC.

Similarly, MONA's education and employment status also became a point of negotiation in her life, as she struggled to balance the desire to be a hands-on parent with also wanting to participate in a fulfilling position outside of the home. MONA spoke at length about her career as a successful "First Teacher" at a Catholic school in the Philippines and even joked that her delayed interest in marriage was the result of "being married to her profession". However, when

asked about having her credentials recognized or in her interest in retraining to become a teacher in Canada, MONA stated that she was not interested in 'redoing' something that she had already achieved. Nevertheless, MONA expressed despair about her struggle to obtain gainful employment in another position, after finding her love for teaching:

> **MONA:** *"My husband said: "No, don't work. If you will work, you will bring the kid to caregiver and your minimum wage," at that time, it was only $7.30, "and you will just pay half to the babysitter." I said: "Yeah, I know." [And he said:] "And you don't really need to work." But I didn't feel like working too because I want to raise my kids [...] Eventually, I was working [at a fast food restaurant] and I thought that I could still be a teacher. [laughs] I was working in a mall with kids, kind of thing. "Ok," I said "This is too degrading." I was just talking to my sister: "This is too degrading, I am working with these kids and now they are going to teach me? I know, I know how to do it! Why are they teaching me?" and stuff like that. [laughs] And it is different when you are working with youngers and you are older and they say: "Do this, do that. Da dada da." I said: "No, teach me well, don't shout at me." So I will address them: "Take it slowly and the next time I will know it." They won't, they won't, they will just make fun of me and so every time I come home I cry. And I said to my husband: "I am not really going to work anymore. I don't want those kids, they are just mean. Blah blah blah. They are not so considerate."*

In trying to utilize her professional skills in her new employment roles, MONA displays how education and employment are central points of negotiation in her life and how this transition has influenced her to behave in a manner in which she could retain portions of her past identity.

While SVITLANA and MONA choose not to pursue retraining or upgrading, ELENA, ANN, and TAMARA sought additional education in efforts to reestablish their familiar sense of place and identity in Canada. TAMARA described how after allowing herself to settle in and learn English during her first two years in Canada, that she was interested in having her credentials recognized and pursing upgrading that would enable her to obtain a career in Canada. In doing so, TAMARA was able to reconnect with an essential part of her sense of self and place, as well as find happiness:

TAMARA: *"Studying is my nature. I always find something to keep me very busy, because otherwise, I would just think that it is wasted time. When I am working or studying, I am enjoying all moments. It is enjoyable time. I enjoy it 100%."*

Later in our conversation, TAMARA expanded on why she placed such importance on retraining and securing a career in Canada, as she explained that these actions enabled her to regain her sense of self and identity.

TAMARA: *[My feelings] have changed. Night and day. [It is like going from] being a baby, sitting in a play pen, and everyone who passes by just pokes their head in and says "Hi!" I remember sometimes people would stand very close to me to talk. They would speak to me like how they would speak to a small child. Am I always feeling like that smart child from movies you know? He looks at the adults and they look so silly, but this child couldn't speak yet, couldn't walk yet, they are changing your diaper and giving you bottle but you understand more than they think [...] I was hard, it was very hard. And I don't know if I would like, or if I could do it for a second time. It was very disappointing when you have already achieved something and suddenly it has all vanished. It is nothing. And your old life is gone, you start from scratch again. All the books again, because you have to regain the knowledge. You have to prove yourself, because they don't know what you know. It is difficult."*

CL: *"So it is sort of like starting from scratch? Would you say that from starting from scratch that you have changed as a person? Your sense of self?"*

TAMARA: *"I built myself already. I don't want to build myself a second time. Maybe some people who could not achieve something before, this would give them the opportunity to do something. I, for a long time, feel like I lost everything because I couldn't use it. I sort of explain, and in my country we never talk about what education you have because it is very impolite, and here I would have to rely on my education to explain who I am and what I am doing because otherwise they look at me like: "blonde"."*

In the same way, ELENA found the ability to immerse herself in familiar training, in order to returning to work as an accountant, to help her regain her confidence and find greater balance in her life:

ELENA: *"I am an accountant, so first what I wanted [when I moved to Canada], is I asked my husbands' sister-in-law, she has a friend she's is a teacher in school, so she gave me, borrowed, borrowed for me for my use from school a basis of bookkeeping kind of accounting. I don't remember the name exactly of it. For me just to get terms, you know, like I know accounting, well, it has the same idea but is a little bit different here, but I wanted to know exact terms because they are different [...] My first one wasn't like, first job was a sales person in a [department] store. I just wanted to start from something. And shortly after, in two months, I found accounting job [...] At my job now, I finally was umm, I noticed that even people started look at me with different eyes, even*

his family. All of the sudden they realized, it is hard for them to understand that when you are limited in English, you feel like you are a baby. You know you try to explain everything with your fingers and you don't know words, and it is just. My husband, when he, he always made the comment, he saw me in the Ukraine and he said that by coming here, I lost all of my confidence. Because I, really I didn't know how to survive, even with help. So with me getting job I gained my confidence back."

As such, the ability to interact with clients and colleagues helped ELENA to further develop her language skills and also develop new ties/relationships outside of her immediate family. The central importance of her work to her sense of self and identity is further illustrated by ELENA's journal reflection and selection of a picture of herself at work as one of her favorites during our photo-elicitation discussion (See Figure 7.4). ELENA writes:

ELENA: *"This picture is of me at work. My work is a big part of my life and I am happy to be able to do what I choose to do in the Ukraine –Accounting."*

Figure 7.4: ELENA "Accounting"

ANNA's discussion about her preparation to take the Canadian Nursing Proficiency Exam highlights the same tensions demonstrated in ELENA's comments about her feelings of dependency. For instance, ANNA discusses that having her nursing credential recognized would

enable her to have greater agency in her life and instill the confidence to make her own

decisions:

> **CL:** *"Are you happy here in Canada?"*
>
> **ANNA:** *"Right now?"*
>
> **CL:** *"Yes."*
>
> **ANNA:** *"Um-hum. I am building my own family."*
>
> **CL:** *"What could be better? What would make you feel happier here in Canada? Is there anything?"*
>
> **ANNA:** *"Maybe when I get to work. [Then] you get to earn your own money and not just ask for it. Yeah."*
>
> **[...]**
>
> **CL:** *"So when you finish your language classes, so that you can take the next test for the nursing board, are you planning to become a nurse in Canada?"*
>
> **ANNA:** *"Yeah, yeah that is what I always thought yeah. I used to work and I am not used to being at home and just dependent on somebody. I don't like that. Sometime I think: "Oh, how long will it be like this?"*
>
> **CL:** *"That is entirely understandable; you were an independent woman before, with a very successful career and a busy life in the Philippines and not that it is not a wonderful thing to be at home with your son, but it is quite a change of pace."*
>
> **ANNA:** *"Yeah he [my husband] told me like: "But now we have a son." And I said: "Yeah we do but that is not it, I have my profession too, that is the other [...] "Yeah, I think that I, especially now that I don't have work I kind of feel different. When you don't have work, I don't know, you can picture the world like, it is kind of like you are in a cave or something when you don't have work."*
>
> **CL:** *"So do you feel like a little part of yourself is almost missing sometimes when you are not able to be a nurse? Like when you are not able to do your job?"*
>
> **ANNA:** *"Yes, I actually mentioned that to my tutor when we were kind of like out. Yeah, I always communicate with my friends back in the USA who are working and are doing this and that. And I think: "Oh, I wish I could do that!"*
>
> **CL:** *"So would you say that the ANNA from the Philippines is different from the ANNA here in Canada? Or is your identity or sense of yourself sort of the same? "*
>
> **ANNA:** *"Yes, it is the same here, but there are differences. There are things that I can't do here because I don't have work; and because there I can buy this and buy that, go to the store, like anything. I can,"*
>
> **CL:** *"So your perspective is a little different?"*
>
> **ANNA:** *"Yeah, but here, I also like understand my husband because he is just the one who is working and I can't be like: "Buy me this and buy me that."*

While ANNA struggles with feelings of dependency, her actions are a clear demonstration of her wiliness to be an active agent in her relationship and her goal to attain balance in her life through the renegotiation of her sense of place and identity.

Through these narratives, one is able to observe the significance of employment and educational opportunities to the renegotiation of place and identity in a new environment. It is through these opportunities to engage and interact outside of the home and the marital relationship that foreign brides are able to exercise their agency and gain a sense of independence. In doing so, they are able to reconnect with aspects of their past experiences to forge their new transnational identities.

7.3 Transnational Connections & Cultural Refueling Opportunities

Discussion of typical activities and daily routines often elicited very detailed responses from the women. Interestingly, details gathered from these simple questions often best illustrated how the women were working to renegotiate their sense of place and identity in a new environment. In the discussion below, the women demonstrate how engagement in their culture through communication, transnational social opportunities, and routine practices helped them to feel more settled and enabled them to renegotiate feelings of being and belonging in Canada.

7.3.1 Food

A prime example of how elicitive discussions of basic practices can be seen in the type of conversation that occurred as a result of talking about food. Since food plays a fundamental role in the way we live and organize our lives, discussion of/about food served as a catalyst to ignite broader conversations about lifestyles and livelihoods, and moreover, demonstrated the symbolic and literal power of food in shaping one's perception, and negotiations of place and identity.

For KITTY, the discussion of food enabled her to recall topophilic memories of the

Philippines, as well as create transnational connections to her culture while living in Canada. For

example, when asked about what she misses the most about living in the Philippines, KITTY

references food as a primary to connection with her culture and memories of home:

> **KITTY:** *"WEATHER! Yeah, the weather. THE FOODS! [...] You know, the fresh foods, you know. To be honest, you can eat a lot of things there compared to here. Well of course things are harder here in Fort St. John, because there aren't as many varieties but going down south, in Vancouver, there is a lot of varieties. But back home, it's, it's just the smell [laughs] [...] It is definitely different because when you go to the market or when you go just even walking, sometime you can just smell this, well especially when it rains, it is so dry and it rains, like the smell of fresh raining. And whenever you walk into the market, you can smell those stinky fish, or whatever is there."*

In addition to food being a central point of discussion in our conversations, many of KITTY's

photographs and journal entries also referenced food. In the journal entry and accompanying

photograph selection (Figure 7.5), KITTY explains how sharing a meal facilitates connections

with friends, enables her to engage in her culture, language, and traditions:

Figure 7.5: KITTY "Lunch with Friends"

KITTY: *"[This picture is] taken at our dining room table one last noon of summer. That was me in the green shirt with the tape measure around my neck. [My friend] comes to visit at least once a week to have her children play with my younger children. As you can see, we are eating something during our lunch hour. We Filipinos eat three times a day*

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with rice and something on the sides and we call it 'ulam'. Filipinos love to entertain in whatsoever way we can. And I love having Filipino friends come over to my house so we can dine together and catch up with so many things. It reminds me of the word 'kapitbahay' or 'nananagapit bahay' (visiting next door neighbor). [I took this picture because] it reminds me of home when I dine with my fellow Filipinos with the same food and not worrying about how we eat it. In this picture, we have fried eggplant, langanesa (cured pork sausage), rice and pancit (chow mien). Normally, we eat with our hands back home."

In contrast to the positive connections KITTY associates with food in bringing her closer to her culture in her new environment, MONA's discussion about food highlights feelings of homesickness, isolation, and the negotiations she encounters while trying to raise a multicultural family. For instance, MONA identified the lack of availability/access to traditional foods and ingredients in northern BC to be one of the challenges she faced when pregnant with her daughters:

> **MONA:** *"I have to adjust although, although when I was conceiving I was craving for Filipino food and I kept calling my Mom and I would say: "Oh, I wish I could eat that! I wish I could eat that." My Mom said: "Is there nothing there?" And I said: "Well, there is none because there is no Filipino store here," I said "big cities there is." She asked: "What have you eaten?" And I said: "I don't know how to cook," because I really didn't cook back home because, I don't cook. It is my brother who cooks for my family because I go to work. If I was to cook they would be laughing at my cooking [...] during my conception, I ate only peppers and ice-cream! Because I would put everything else out."*

Additionally, MONA's discussion of food also served as a connection to discuss larger social and familial issues. In commenting about the challenges she faces when cooking traditional meals, MONA identified her negotiation of balancing two cultures simultaneously while raising a multicultural family:

> **MONA:** *"They don't want me to cook [...] They only eat my noodle when I cook. But we go quite often to Mama Panda, to Chinese food, but when I cook Filipino, they don't eat it because of the smell, they think it is gross. And my kids are so picky and stuff. But I never really assert, make them eat and to teach them how to speak our dialect and language and stuff. I never did [...]"*
>
> **CL:** *"So does it make you sad that they aren't as interested in Filipino culture?"*
>
> **MONA:** *"Actually, it never did. It never did until, until we visit with a Filipino family. And they will say: "Oh, what can I prepare?" and I will say: "It's ok, they're fine, as*

long as there is hamburger."[And they say:] "Oh, I have hamburger!" Stuff like that. Until then I didn't realize: "What can I do? What can I do?" This is Canada though. They are Canadian so? It is so hard to raise a multicultural family. Very hard."

While food did not play a literal role in the establishment of MONA's sense of place and identity, discussion about food allowed MONA to speak about the social and cultural struggles that she endures, as well as highlights her feelings of 'betweenness' and disconnection.

Similarly to MONA, TAMARA's discussion of food also highlights the difficulty she experienced before migrating to Canada, as well as her struggle to feel settled in the first few years. For instance, TAMARA shares that the stress of preparing to leave her life in the Ukraine, while trying to learn English, caused her to lose a significant amount of weight:

> **TAMARA:** *"Yeah, it was hard. I lost a lot of weight. No, it was interesting. I lost a lot of weight before I came to Canada. I came to Canada 80 pounds."*
>
> **CL:** *"Wow!"*
>
> **TAMARA:** *"I was 80 pounds. I could hardly take a step. I was so tired. And it was so different here it, I didn't take many things in my life, only what is special here (motions to her heart). I come from a country where people only live by their needs, nothing extra. And I started try everything and I gained 52 pounds in three months. I lost most of them, for a long time after I was 95 pounds or 93, maybe 97. In the last year I started to pick up, I am maybe 102 now because I work physically and my muscle has gained. I work out, but no too hard."*

Although, TAMARA describes gaining weight and becoming healthier, she also discusses her continual struggle with food given that the abundance and availability of food in Canada serves as a constant reminder of what her family does not have in the Ukraine.

> **TAMARA:** *"I had some stress. Well, I couldn't call it stress. I was upset about several things. For example, I couldn't open fridge because there is so much food."*
>
> **CL:** *"Here in Canada?"*
>
> **TAMARA:** *"Yeah, fridges are so full and have special freezers. And I umm feel guilty to try because my family don't have it.[...] And everything that I want to try, always, my husband buy everything, and I feel like it is not real; like my subconscious is telling me: "It's not fair."*

Specifically, Figure 7.6 demonstrates the struggle TAMARA feels when she opens her fridge.
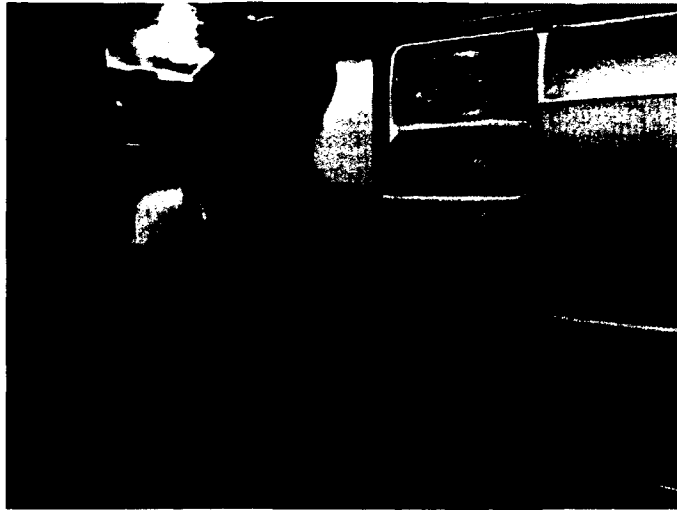
Figure 7.6: TAMARA "Full Fridge"

Through the discussion of food, one is able to observe the benefits of routines, practices, and memories to the development of transnational connections and identities, as well as the difficulty and disconnection that is associated with living between and within two cultures simultaneously.

7.3.2 Social Events & Cultural Opportunities

While each woman shared examples of positive interactions and social engagement in their new environment, the common tread woven through their narratives was the social and cultural negotiations they experienced as a result of living in northern communities with small cultural networks and limited cultural refuelling opportunities.

For example, ELENA discussed how settling in a small rural community after living in a large, high density urban environment for the majority of her life, to have greatly affected her ability to (re)establish her sense of place and identity. In the following comment, Elena discusses her difficulty integrating into a small rural community due to a lack of services and social opportunities, and how her happiness has improved since she moved to a larger centre:

> **ELENA:** *"I meet people, which is huge thing for me, socializing. I have, I, by the time I used to Canada, I wasn't happy in [small northern community]. If, my husband would still have job there, it probably it would be big issue because I didn't know what to do there.*

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Farm, is not interested me at all. I need social life, I need city, and I need people. And it is something what he doesn't want, because you know, he was happy, he was born there, he was happy with what he has. And umm, so it's why it changed, here, that I am not trapped in my house. I am going somewhere and doing something. I am busy. I have my own money. I didn't like fact that my Husband had to support me all of the time. I wanted to have my own money. So, the fact that I am busy and I have some [pause] more, you know like in [a rural community], well, you go into store everybody know who you are. Which they think is a good thing, for me it isn't. I don't want people to know who I am and what I'm buying and I have to talk to them. I want to be lost in a crowd, which I guess is also big difference."

Even though ELENA's much happier in a larger centre, she still identifies that there are limited cultural networks and opportunities:

ELENA: *"Yeah, so, I, for me like if you ask me what I want Ukrainian or Russian here, well maybe just to kind of, just something to be able to meet maybe Russians and Ukrainian. Which I know that, when we are here we are not that close together and I know there is few of us. And we don't have opportunity to meet each other. Really. I went in the Ukrainian church, Catholic, they had that perogie and whatever sale. So I went to there, well I find out, there was about fifteen people; none of them speak Russian or Ukrainian. They were born here. And they, well what they can say is: "Hi". And, and they have no idea where I came from, when I am trying to explain which part of Ukraine. So they are not really, I know there is people who came just recently. It is what I would like to meet. Just because they, I know they will be close, we will be close because we have the same experience to go through and understand each other. Yeah, so, how does it make it happen. I don't know that?"*

Similarly to ELENA, MONA repeatedly commented on the lack of cultural opportunities she faced when she first arrived in northern BC, due to the small immigrant population in the community that she and RAY settled in:

CL: *"So when you came to Fort St. John, were there very many Filipino people here?"*

MONA: *"No."*

CL: *"And so there weren't very many cultural opportunities then?"*

MONA: *"No, no, but we survived. We are good Filipinos, we found the church and it helped us like, like invited us to stuff and invited us to Filipino parties and stuff. But actually it was only good for a moment. Until we get kids and they are calling me: "Why aren't you coming to Filipino parties?" and it is because of the way that we hold our parties, because they are left out. Actually, my husband was just following me, filling me, kind of because I was just new so I was looking for, company, Filipino company. But actually, he too was trying hard during that time; 1990's. And because, nobody will talk to him though; because they are scared. Because I was the only, no, I was the second*

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Filipino to marry a foreigner in that town. So it was a very different sort of thing. He was just coming with me because I would just get mad. Because I said: "No, I will not go if you do not come!"

MONA's comment highlights the limited nature of cultural networks during her settlement, as well as identifies how being in a multicultural relationship influenced her participation and engagement with the Filipino community.

While the immigrant community has grown substantially since MONA's arrival in the early 1990's, ANNA's comments reinforce the limited presence of viable minorities and ethnic diversity in northern communities, when she discusses settling in the same community nearly 25 years later:

> **ANNA:** *"When I had, I always had to walk when I was pregnant and I was in the store and I didn't see any Filipinos, I would ask: "What does this say/what does that say?" It was really hard not to see any Filipinos here. Because we are remote."*
>
> **CL:** *"So do you feel sort of disconnected because you are in a rural and remote place?"*
>
> **ANNA:** *"Yes, yeah."*
>
> **CL:** *"Do you think that if you lived in a more urban place like Vancouver or Edmonton that it would be,"*
>
> **ANNA:** *"It would be different I think! Because I can see lots of people."*

While connections to home are tremendously important, as ANNA's comment highlights above, the ability to engage with people of similar cultural heritage and backgrounds in one's place of settlement pays an equally important role. When this research first began, MONA, ANNA, and KITTY, who all live in the same northern community, shared a close friendship and common bond given that they had all migrated from the same country. This relationship was developed through engagement with the Filipino community and these interactions played a vital role in the reestablishment of their sense of place and identity by providing local and transnational connections to home. However, over the duration of this research, the friendship between these women became strained by a disagreement in the Filipino community regarding political

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tensions at home in the Philippines. The subsequent division that occurred, as a result of the political conflict, has had significant local and transnational ramifications and can thus be seen as an additional barrier or negotiation endured by the women. KITTY speaks about the challenges she had endured as part of a small immigrant community when she comments:

> **KITTY:** *"Ok, yeah it's very challenging actually. It is very challenging because, I, I don't know if I want to tell or if I want to say it but, now it's getting challenge for me because personally, the Filipino community is growing and not all Filipinos are kind of close to each other. So sometimes it is a challenge for me."*
>
> **CL:** *"Right."*
>
> **KITTY:** *"Very, I'm not going to say anything bad words or anything like that but it is a challenge. Growing community, growing Filipino community. You, you want to help, but you don't know if she wants to accept your help or if she will say something about: "Oh, she is helping because she is you know, blah, blah, blah."*
>
> **CL:** *"Right. So there is kind of a discord in the community? Or like a division?"*
>
> **KITTY:** *"Yeah, yeah. You could say that. Division. Yeah. There is a little bit of division I could tell, like a challenge. Yeah. So the division is bad."*

MONA further comments on the power dynamics in the community, due to the political divide:

> **MONA:** *"That is how Filipinos destroy each other."*
>
> **CL:** *"They destroy each other?"*
>
> **MONA:** *"Yeah they do. We do."*
>
> **CL:** *"Is it hard to [pause] get along isn't the right word, but to,"*
>
> **MONA:** *"That would be the right term. That would be the right term because of like competition. A Filipino lady is a very competitive lady!"*

From ANNA's, MONA's KITTY's and ELENA's comments, one can understand the critical role that social interactions and cultural refuelling opportunities play in shaping perceptions of inclusion and exclusion, and accordingly, mobility and feelings of being and belonging in new environments.

7.3.3 Communication

Globalization has enabled increased interconnectivity of the world, thereby linking peripheral places of the earth to core spaces of global conductivity. As a result of this "time-space compression" (Massey 1997, 316), new realities and geographies are exposed through individual, community, national, and transnational scales of interaction (Kapur 2001, 7; Li 2003, 14; Nolin et al., 2009, 3). As such, transnational connections allow transmigrants to feel connected to their country of origin and settlement at the same time, which in turn, can catalyze and constrain settlement and integration.

For instance, ANNA, ELENA, and SVITLANA discuss how conversations with home via telephone, video calling, and emailing enabled simultaneity of experience which helped to ease settlement in their new environments. Specifically, ANNA explains that the ability to speak her language, both locally and with her family via the Internet, helped to make her feel like she was home:

> **ANNA:** *"I think it helped me because I know that they are ok there, stuff like that. Plus I can talk my language. Actually, when I came here, for about two or three months, I don't, I didn't see any Filipinos to talk with. So I, I like talking to my family."*
>
> **CL:** *"So when you speak in your language, does it sort of feel like you are home? Like if you close your eyes, is it almost like being there?"*
>
> **ANNA:** *"Yes, like umm, when we went and we had that party. Yeah, the one who cooked the pig was Filipinos. So when I got there, that was the first time I had talked with Filipinos and I was feeling like I was at home."*

Figure 7.7: ANNA "Welcome Home"

The banner depicted in Figure 7.7 was hung at the party hosted for ANNA when she first arrived at her new home in Canada and when she was first able to meet Filipino people in her new community.

Similarly, ELENA described the ability to keep in contact with her family to help combat feelings of homesickness:

> **ELENA:** *"My husband, being aware that I can get homesick and umm, all that stuff, he was umm, taking me outside like a lot for picnics or you know with his family like for a different umm, berry picking, when spring came. Also, I wanted to communicate a lot. For first time, I wanted to talk to my family, all of the time because I couldn't get it in English, my English was limited. So, and I wanted somebody from my world, like what I felt was that I was in a totally different world. It's beautiful, it's gorgeous, my husband was very supportive, but I was like feeling like I'm visiting. So I was talking to them. But it is big time difference: ten hours. But I was writing email, sending them pictures, you know, making them videos and all that stuff."*

Moreover, SVITLANA describes being motivated by conversations with her family to better herself and gain employment, so that she could help support her family:

> **SVITLANA:** *"No definitely I have to. I have to know how they are doing and are good kind of; otherwise I don't feel complete. Yeah, if I know that they are not doing very good then, they, because they give their life until we left for us [...] It doesn't make me*

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homesick, I just, it makes me sad; I just want to help, and help, and help them you know. That is why I always want to get three jobs. Every time I get a little bit of money I am thinking: "Oh God. I have to send some money." You have to manage your money and then you can help, but you still have to think about yourself."

In contrast, KITTY and TAMARA explained that they did not feel the need to extensively communicate with their families and friends back at home in order to feel settled:

CL: *"Keeping in contact with your family, did that make you feel more settled in Canada or did make you sad and feel like you wanted to go home?*

KITTY: *"No, no I don't feel, I don't, I didn't feel, I really didn't feel that I want to go home. No, because my vision is to start fresh in a different country. So I really didn't feel that: "Oh, I wanna go home. I wanna go home!" Of course I can feel that, but after the person call. It is not because I want to go home because I don't like Canada. Just to visit maybe. Just to have a taste of you know."*

CL: *"So keeping in contact with family helps you feel, or to feed that part of your body that also still wants to be a part of a family here as well?"*

KITTY: *"Yeah. Yes."*

TAMARA: *"I only speak with my Mom, sometimes with my Aunts, but not very often [...] When I came here I used to keep in contact with a lot of friends. We keep in touch for a while and then we just lost [touch] and stopped. I understand, when I look at the map, it is like somebody just cut the map up into pieces. There is just so much distance."*

7.3.4 Home

The influential nature of transnational connections is clearly demonstrated within the above discussion. However, the true illustration of foreign brides' simultaneity of experience is captured by the women's discuss of 'home'. While these women have had to endure significant challenges and negotiations throughout their settlement and integration experiences, each of their responses exhibited the (re)establishment of sense of place and identity in their new environment.

For instance, MONA shares that every time she returns to Canada after visiting the Philippines, that her sense of home is reestablished upon her return:

MONA: *"Wherever we have been, we go when the kids were small and every time we go somewhere we always say: "It is time to go home." And we always find Fort St. John home to us, to us as a family because I find Fort St. John, not anymore now but, but like very simple, the way I like it, and the way for me it is safe to raise kids. Although many people say: "You are living in a remote place; very remote!" Of course, in 1990 it was still remote. And I saw Fort St. John grow. So I still feel, I like because that is how we have back home in the city where I was teaching, we were almost, like, not pioneers, but you feel like there are lots of people who knows you kind of thing. Yeah, sense of belonging kind of here in Fort St. John. [...] This is home and at the same time the Philippines, but more so Canada. Because I always tell my friends if I did not come for, to, to have a family then I would not consider it a home. My home would be in the Philippines.*

ANNA shares a similar response to MONA when she comments on returning to Canada following a vacation:

CL: *"So when you were able to go home, how did that feel?"*

ANNA: *"It was like: "I am here! I am back!"*

Moreover, KITTY acknowledges how having a family in Canada has helped to her to develop a bifocal sense of home:

KITTY: *"It, at this point in my life, I should say umm, it is going to be both. It's going to be both. I can't say: "Oh, the Philippines is not my home anymore."*

CL: *"No, and not that it ever wouldn't be,"*

KITTY: *"Yeah, yeah. It is both. Because in the first place, my husband is from here and my roots are from the Philippines and I want my kids to also learn more about my culture."*

TAMARA articulates her bifocal perception of home when she discusses one of her photographs (Figure 7.8) within her journal entry:

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Figure 7.8: TAMARA "Ukrainian Flag"

TAMARA: *"[This picture is important because of the] horizon, amazing. Canola fields, and endless horizon. [...] For me this picture is like a symbol of the Ukrainian flag. Blue and yellow fields. And this yellow field could be sunflowers, or canola or whatever. When I look at this, I feel like I am at home, back at home. I think it is special because I don't see this kind of picture every day."*

Similarly to TAMARA, ELENA discusses positive feelings in her acknowledgement of Canada

as her new home, she comments:

> **ELENA:** *"I can definitely say that Ukraine doesn't feel like my home anymore. And I found that out this summer when returned. Before I went there this summer I would have probably answered both. [But all] through all my trip there I was just thinking about Canada and how much I want to be here and when I came here, I was really happy and I definitely felt like this is my home. This is where I want to be. Where I belong [...] I love Canada and I am always thinking that I have been here; I want to fit it, be a part of it. So, I do not want to make another Chinatown, only like Ukraine or something. I know we have to keep our, little bit carry on our traditions or something, but I didn't want to change it too much. Like, I want to learn how to be Canadian."*

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7.4 Conclusion

From the discussion and findings presented above, one is able to appreciate that the renegotiation of sense of place and identity is not bound to one space or time, but rather takes place at several scales of experience. The layers of the social, political, and physical landscapes, or taken as a whole one's social reality, are comprised of varied and particular experiences throughout one's life; these experiences can be fragmented, temporary, and transitional, but their influence ultimately positions individuals to engage in new ways of being and belonging. These socially constructed experiences position our understanding, affect our behavior, and influence the renegotiation of sense of place and identity.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

> I'm not sure I can tell the truth…I can only tell what I know.
>
> (A Cree Hunter, in Clifford 1986, 8)

8.1 Introduction

The rapid growth of the marriage migration industry, due to the increased ease and accessibility of the internet, has qualitatively and quantitatively reshaped the process and defined a new transnational "marriage-scape" (Constable 2005). However, very little is known about this form of migration or the outcomes of marriage migration relationships, due to the lack of formal documentation and governance over the process (Cotè et al., 2001; Belleau 2003). While Canadian studies advocated for greater awareness of this social practice more than a decade ago, given the intense uncertainty, vulnerability, and abuse commonly associated with the marriage migration relationships, no significant action has been taken to develop a greater understanding of this process or identify ways to reduce the vulnerability of those involved. Moreover, this lack of action is further compounded by a growing knowledge gap, due to the changes in scope and scale, as well as locations of origin and settlement predominated within this form of migration (Belleau 2003b, 596; Constable 2005, 3), which has resulted in the use of hegemonic generalizations and discourse to explain this process.

In response to the above-mentioned concerns, the intent of this thesis is to develop a greater understanding of the lived experiences of foreign brides in rural, non-metropolitan settings in order to highlighting power relations and other characteristics of the social, cultural, and political landscape which shape their transnational experiences, place making strategies, and renegotiation of identity. In shifting my examination away from past approaches to marriage migration research, and instead incorporating theoretical frameworks and conceptual approaches

which focus on the experience of the individual in an unexplored landscape, I identify how a foreign bride's corporeal experience in her place of settlement, as well as her transnational lived experiences of her place of origin, combine to create a multi-focal sense of belonging and identity (Mahler 1998, 79; Lawson 2000, 173; Levitt & Glick-Schiller 2004, 1003; Goldring & Krishnamurti 2007, 5).

8.2 Research Questions & Discussion of Approach to Analysis

To explore how foreign brides' every day, lived experiences of transnational marriage migration, settlement, and integration are mediated by their physiological experiences and multi local perspectives, and accordingly, how these experiences inform their renegotiation of identity and place, I implemented two primary research questions and two secondary research questions to guide the inquiry:

1. How do the physical, social, and cultural landscapes of a northern community affect the settlement and integration experiences of foreign brides?

   1.1 How have foreign brides' perceptions of social inclusion/ social exclusion shaped their mobility, renegotiation of identity, and place making strategies?

2. Are transnational linkages present and how does that effect place making skills and (re)construction of identity in a new environment?

   2.1 What types of services (i.e. education, employment, and wellness) are available to foreign brides to aid in settlement and integration to northern communities?

While these are strong research questions and tremendously interesting information was collected in asking them, the responses gathered did not did not directly answer the questions

posed. Alternatively, these questions served as a departure point for an in-depth exploration of the experiences, perceptions, and narratives of the women who participated, and as such, warranted a refocus of my research questions.

Rather than objectify the perspectives shared to conform to the structure of my overarching research questions, I embrace the nature of the exploratory case study method and acknowledge the importance of allowing the women's perspectives and understanding to unfold organically within their narratives (Staeheli & Lawson 1994, 99; Madge et al., 1997, 92; Lawson 1995, 452). In making this choice, I recognize the boundaries inherent within the construction of social knowledge which limit my ability to speak for the women (Staeheli & Lawson 1994, 99) and instead provide space for situated knowledges to be explored, as well as allow individual voices, reflections, and particular experiences to come to the fore (Haraway 1988, 583). My decision to present the information gathered in this manner is informed by Anthropologist James Clifford's (1986, 9) comments on the importance of understanding the limitations of ethnographic research and the qualitative researcher in interpreting and representing cultures. Clifford explains that:

> 'Cultures' do not hold still for their portraits. Attempts to make them do so always involve simplification and exclusion, selection of a temporal focus, the construction of a particular self-other relationship, and the imposition or negotiation of a power relationship.

Thus, in recognizing the inherent "crisis of representation" (Marcus & Fischer 1987, 8) if I were to try and directly answer my research questions, I instead am critically reflexive of my power and responsibility in the research relationship (Geertz 1988, 36; Katz 1994, 69; Nast 1994, 57), and accordingly, have aimed to write from the margins within my analysis (Haig-Brown 2003, 419). In doing so, the women's narratives take precedence and (re)shape the structure of research questions (Abu-Lughod 1991; Nolin 2006) to allow for the presentation of "inherently imperfect mode[s] of knowledge, which produces gaps as it fills them" (Clifford 1986, 8).

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Therefore, I do not perceive the need to refocus my research questions as a flaw in the research design, delivery, or experience; instead, I consider the ability for new insight and understanding to come to light as the most beneficial aspect of this inquiry. Moreover, I believe that my refusal to generalize or simplify the narratives shared by the women to fit the proposed research questions demonstrates the rigor and validity of this research (Baxter & Eyles 1997, 511), in addition to contributing new knowledge and understanding to an understudied field of inquiry.

8.3 Research Contributions

Although my analysis did not directly adhere to the proposed research questions, I argue that valuable information was gathered through this research pursuit and that much can be learned from the information obtained. In presenting the range of experiences shared, grouped by the four primary points of negotiation, this research demonstrates how experiences of inclusion and exclusion in new environments and across transnational social space (Nolin 2006, 148; Goldring & Krishnamurti 2007, 1) shape individual perceptions of mobility, new ways of being and belonging, and the (re)construction of identity and place by foreign brides.

Consequently, I believe my research has contributed to the advancement of knowledge in three specific ways. First, I identify the individual and particular nature of foreign brides' experiences, and in doing so, argue for the need to resist hegemonic discourse and generalizations. Second, I highlight the importance of utilizing research methods and approaches which explore the multi-scaled and multi-local experiences of foreign brides by identifying points of negotiation (family dynamics; independence and agency; transnational connections and cultural refueling opportunities) that have not been explored in previous inquiries of marriage migration relationships. And third, I illustrate how shifting the context of settlement from urban

to rural illuminates new insights regarding the vulnerabilities associated with this form of migration, as well as identify aspects of the northern settlement and integration experience which could be transferable to other migrant groups. In the following sections, I expand on each of these research contributions.

7.3.1. Individuality & Particularity

By shifting the structure of the inquiry to focus on individual experiences of marriage migration, this study is one of the first to acknowledge settlement and integration experiences within the marriage migration process, rather than only focusing on motivations and outcomes of the marital relationship. In providing a bottom-up approach and utilizing narratives, my research highlights the range and the particularity of foreign brides' experiences, and reaffirms the need to understand the diverse interests, desires, and motivations which inform their decision to marry and migrate. Moreover, my research resists the use of top-down generalizations to explain structural push/pull factors or the categorization of marriage migration relationships as distinctly positive or negative, and instead seeks to understand the unique perspectives of foreign brides by exploring their individual and particular experiences of settlement, integration, and transnational marriage migration. In doing so, my research is able to illustrate to the local, global, and gendered dynamics which inform their multi-sited experiences and identify central points of negotiation in the marriage migration process.

7.3.2 Multi-Scaled & Multi-Local Approaches: Uncovering Points of Negotiation

While past research on marriage migration has highlighted various aspects of the marriage migration process, my research focuses on identifying the individual and particular experiences of foreign brides using place, identity, and corporality as conceptual approaches, and as such, is one of the first to explore foreign brides' hierarchy of place experience. The

application of this conceptual lens greatly benefited my research by enabling me to identify significant points of negotiation within and across foreign brides' transnational experiences. Specifically, this lens enabled me to examine family dynamics as a central negation in the lives of foreign brides and highlight the importance of these relationships to the success of the marital relationship and overall settlement and integration experience; accordingly, my research identifies an area of settlement and integration that has not been discussed in other examinations of marriage migration. Furthermore, this lens enabled me to key into both the subtle cues and apparent indicators of mobility, agency, and independency to identify how foreign brides' multi-scaled and multi-sited experiences inform their renegotiation of place and identity in a new environment.

7.3.3 Settlement and Integration in a Rural Setting: Exposing Vulnerabilities

As previously mentioned, marriage migration in Canada has been almost exclusively studied from an urban perspective (Cotè et al., 2001; Belleau 2003). Thus, in looking at this practice in a rural setting, my research is able to highlight aspects of the migration experience that may have been overlooked or underemphasized in urban studies. For example, the potential for increased vulnerability and abuse if brides do not possess language proficiency in their country of settlement is often identified in urban studies of marriage migration. Yet, in contrast, my research highlights the intensification of this vulnerability when access to formal services and informal networks is limited or nonexistent. Moreover, in highlighting characteristics of the northern, rural, remote landscapes which influence the success of settlement and integration of foreign brides, such as the importance of transnational connections and cultural refueling opportunities, my research serves as a transferable point of reference for understanding the experiences of other migrant groups settling in this type of environment.

8.4 Recommendations and Future Research Directions

I acknowledge the limitations of this thesis and my ability to make to make strong policy recommendations, given that this is only one study conducted in a localized area; however, I feel this research signifies a step forward in the development of a greater understanding foreign brides' experiences, and as such, seeks to promote awareness of possible methods to achieve enhance wellness through further research and support for these women.

For instance, I recognize that is very difficult to argue for increase funding for organizations which provide language training, support for new immigrants, and outreach for women in need, without quantitative evidence that the current system is not sufficient; however, I believe this research confirms the occurrence of a significant issue in northern BC and identifies how vulnerability is significantly increased when there is limited availability of these services. Therefore, in providing this awareness, my thesis serves as a call for action to community organizations and researchers to take up the cause by recommending the further investigation on marriage migration in northern BC. Specifically, I recommend future research directions that include an increase in scope and scale, by implementing methodologies informed by network analysis, incorporating more study communities, and increasing the size of the study population, to enable a policy focused argument. In doing so, this type of study would serve to inform provincial and federal governments of the need for greater funding for support services, as well as provide space to comment on the need for a reevaluation of the spousal sponsorship process and the introduction of proper documentation in order to reduce vulnerability.

8.5 Conclusion

In examining foreign brides' settlement and integration experiences, in both familial and community contexts through transnational and feminist lenses, this inquiry has enabled greater insight into the effects that migration and marriage have on an individual's sense of self, belonging, place and identity. Moreover, in exploring marital relationships, family dynamics, perceptions of independence and agency, as well as cultural refueling opportunities, this research has identified how experiences of inclusion and exclusion in new environments, and across transnational social space (Goldring & Krishnamurti 2007, 1) have shaped individual perceptions of mobility, (re)construction of identities, and place making strategies. In doing so, this research contributes to the development of a greater understanding of the marriage migration process, acknowledges how northern, rural, non-metropolitan landscapes shape settlement and integration, and illustrates how foreign brides negotiate their sense of self, place, and identity in new environments and across transnational space.

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Appendix 1: UNBC Research Ethics Approval Letter

UNBC UNIVERSITY OF
NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA   **RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD**

MEMORANDUM

To:	Courtney Wood
CC:	Catherine Nolin
From:	Henry Harder, Chair
	Research Ethics Board
Date:	April 30, 2009
Re:	**E2009.0420.057**
	Marriage Migration in Northern British Columbia: Place and Identity Among Foreign Brides

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Thank you for submitting the above-noted proposal to the Research Ethics Board. Some changes and clarification have been requested;

- Provide clarity on the storage and destruction of the data
- Clarify for the committee the particulars surrounding interpreters involvement and if an interpreter is utilized a confidentiality agreement must be signed

Please provide a copy of your proposal with these modifications to Debbie Krebs in the Office of Research and a letter of approval will be forwarded.

Sincerely,

Henry Harder

Appendix 2: Information Sheet for Interviews

U|NBC *UNIVERSITY OF*
NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA

3333 University Way, Prince George, B.C., Canada   V2N 4Z9

Courtney LeBourdais   Tel: (250) 960-5303
Master of Arts Candidate in NRES   Fax: (250) 960-6533
Geography Program   Internet: www.unbc.ca/geography
                                                              Email : cwood0@unbc.ca

Marriage Migration in Northern British Columbia:
Place and Identity among Foreign Brides

Information Sheet for Interviews

Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of my thesis research study is to understand the settlement and integration experiences of women who have settled in northern British Columbia as foreign brides. By sharing your lived experiences, you will be aiding in improving our understanding of marriage and migration, as well as the potential changes that settlement in a northern, rural, non-metropolitan environment may have on an individual's sense of place and identity.

We hope that you will take part in this research project by participating in an interview to discuss your experiences of marriage and migration, as well as your experiences and perceptions of living in a northern, non-metropolitan environment.

How Participants Were Selected:

You were selected as a potential participant by an individual or organization within the project's database on the criteria that you are a recent immigrant to the community of Prince George, Fort St. John, and/or Dawson Creek.

Voluntary Participation:

Your participation in this project is entirely voluntary and, as such, you may choose not to participate. If you participate, you have the right to terminate the interview at any time. Also, you do not have to answer any question(s) with which you feel uncomfortable. You may withdraw from the project at any time and any information that you have contributed will be withdrawn as well.

Anonymity and Confidentiality:

All information that you share during the interview will be held within strict confidence by the researchers. All records will be kept in a locked cabinet in the Northern BC Immigration Networks' research office at UNBC. Only the researcher, Courtney LeBourdais, and her thesis supervisor, Dr. Catherine Nolin, will have access to these data. Codes will be used to identify information provided by participants in all research materials, instead of personal identifiable information (i.e. participant's name or community). Neither the names of the participants nor any information that may identify

individuals or organizations will be used in any reporting, unless the participant specifies that this information be deliberately disclosed. All information will be kept until the final report of the project is completed (approximately five years). After this time, all coding and information indexes with identifiable personal information will be deleted from computer records and all paper copies will be shredded. All original digital recordings, notes from interviews and transcripts will be retained indefinitely.

Potential Risks and Benefits:

This project has been assessed by the UNBC research Ethics Board. They believe that this project presents no additional risks to participants than were previously outlined. We hope that by participating and sharing your experiences, that we will have a greater understanding of marriage and migration, as well as the effect that settlement in a northern, rural, non-metropolitan environment has on an individual's sense of place and identity, so that we could potentially identify ways in which the settlement and integration experiences of future (im)migrants could be enhanced. We envision the information that you provide to be of use to service providers and policy makers who might consider your experiences in making changes to future programs and services for foreign brides.

Research Results:

Research results and analysis obtained from this research project will be disseminated via a thesis document, as well as reports, journal articles, and conference presentations.

Questions, Concerns, or Complaints:

We welcome you to provide us with feedback regarding any questions or concerns that you may have with this project. Please contact: Courtney LeBourdais (250-960-5303; cwood0@unbc.ca) or her thesis supervisor, Dr. Catherine Nolin (250-960-5875; nolin@unbc.ca) in the Geography Program at UNBC. Any complaints about this project should be directed to the UNBC Office of Research and Graduate Programs (250-960-5820; reb@unbc.ca).

We are grateful for you time and consideration, and thank you in advance for your participation in this important project.

Sincerely,

_____   _____

Courtney LeBourdais   Dr. Catherine Nolin
M.A. Candidate   Associate Professor, Thesis Supervisor
Geography Program   Geography Program
UNBC   UNBC
3333 University Way   3333 University Way
Prince George, B.C   Prince George, B.C
V2N 4Z9   V2N 4Z9
Phone: 250-960-5303   Phone: 250-960-5875
Email: cwood0@unbc.ca   Email: nolin@unbc.ca

Appendix 3: Information Sheet for Photovoice

UNBC UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA

3333 University Way, Prince George, B.C., Canada V2N 4Z9

Dr. Catherine Nolin
Associate Professor
Geography Program

. Tel: (250) 960-5845
Fax: (250) 960-6533
Internet: www.unbc.ca/geography
Email : nolin@unbc.ca

Enhancing the Warmth of Welcome in the Communities of British Columbia's Northern Region

Information Sheet for Photovoice and Interviews

Purpose of the study:

The purpose of this study is to understand the experiences and perspective of women who have settled in the northern region of British Columbia, specifically women who have arrived as Live-in Caregivers, foreign brides, mail-order brides and/or internet brides. By focusing on the individual experiences of (im)migrant women, we hope to improve our understanding of marriage and migration, as well as our understanding of the service needs of (im)migrant women, in the communities of Prince George, Fort St. John, and Dawson Creek by using a photography technique broadly referred to as *Photovoice*.

We hope that you will take part in this *Photovoice* research project by taking photographs, keeping a journal of your photographs, and participating in an interview to explain your experiences of marriage and migration, as well as your perception of living in a northern, non-metropolitan environment.

What is Photovoice?

Photovoice is a community based participatory research (CBPR) tool that allows participants to give voice to their experiences by taking photographs. In taking photographs, participants are acting as the recorder of their knowledge and expertise. Participant photographs, selected in collaboration with researchers, will be displayed in an exhibition as a way to open community dialogue to discuss and understand participants' experiences and perceptions.

What is required from a participant?

In preparation for the photography portion of this *Photovoice* project, you will be provided with an educational photo lesson by a local photographer to learn the basics of photography and how to use a digital camera. At this time you will be given a digital camera and supplied with a journal to record each picture you take, how you came to take the picture, as well as the meaning and content of the photograph. You will have one month to take photographs and write in the photo journal, after which you will return the memory card and photo journal to the research team at the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC), in a prepaid envelope. Once the photography component of the project is completed, the digital camera will be yours to keep as a token of our gratitude for taking the time to participate in our research project. Additionally, after your photographs are developed, copies (on a CD and printed) will be returned to you.

In addition to the photography component of this *Photovoice* project, we also ask that you participate in

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an interview to discuss how your photographs capture your experiences and perceptions and also to choose 1-2 pictures for enlargement and mounting. This selection process will insure your confidentiality and anonymity is maintained and further, some photographs may be cropped or blurred to protect your privacy. The mounted photos will be put on display in the community and possibly in other exhibits, as opportunities arise. This interview should take approximately 1 hour and will be digitally recorded (with your consent) in order to verify content. We will provide you with a summary of the key themes obtained from your interview.

By participating in this Photovoice project, I understand that:

> I will be taking photos and recording information about the photographs in a journal.
> I will be taking part in a one-on-one interview with a researcher to discuss my photographs.
> I will need to obtain consent from any person(s), organization(s), and/or company(ies) that I photograph.
> With my written or verbal permission, the researcher may use photos and information obtained in interviews and journal entries as part of the final report and other published papers, as well as display the photographs at exhibitions, lectures, in books, or on the internet.

How Participants Were Selected:

You were selected as a potential participant by an individual or organization within the project's database on the criteria that you are a recent immigrant to the community of Prince George, Fort St. John, and/or Dawson Creek.

Voluntary Participation:

Your participation in this project is entirely voluntary and, as such, you may choose not to participate. If you participate, you do not have to answer any question(s) with which you feel uncomfortable and you have the right to terminate your participation with the project at any time. If you decide to terminate your participation, any information that you have contributed will be destroyed. However, you are able to keep the digital camera provided to you, as well as the photographs that you have taken.

Anonymity and Confidentiality:

All photographs that you take and information that you share during the interview will be held within strict confidence by the researchers. All records will be kept in a locked research room at UNBC. Only the research team (investigators and research assistants) will have access to this data. Codes will be used to identify information provided by participants in all research materials, instead of personal identifiable information (i.e. participant's name or community). Neither the names of the participants nor any information that may identify individuals or organizations, obtained through interviews, photographs, and/or photo journals, will be used in any reporting, unless the participant provides written or verbal consent (via a digital recording) stating that this information be deliberately disclosed. All participants who are identifiable in the selected photographs will be asked to sign a consent form before their pictures are displayed or used in research publications. Additionally, selected photographs may be cropped or blurred to further insure participants' anonymity and confidentiality. All information will be kept until the final report of the project is completed. After this time, all coding and information indexes with identifiable personal information will be destroyed. All original digital recordings, photographs, notes from interviews, and transcripts will be retained indefinitely.

Potential Risks and Benefits:

This project has been assessed by the UNBC Research Ethics Board. They believe that this project presents no risks to participants beyond what has been outlined in the anonymity and confidentiality section. We hope that by participating you will have a chance to provide input into how immigrants and newcomers are welcomed into northern British Columbia communities and integrated into their social and economic fabric. We envision the information that you provide to be of use to service providers and

policy makers who might consider your experiences in making changes to future programs and services for live-in caregivers, foreign brides, mail-order brides and/or internet brides.

Research Results:

Research results and analysis obtained from this Photovoice project will be disseminated via reports, journal articles, and conference presentations. Research findings and selected photographs will be presented as part of a community exhibition open to service providers, community organizations and members, and will last 1-2 months. A website, directly linked to the *Northern BC Immigration Network* website (www.unbc.ca/immigration), will also be created and will display photos, quotes, and research findings.

Questions, Concerns, or Complaints:

We welcome you to provide us with feedback regarding any questions or concerns that you may have with this project. Please contact: Catherine Nolin (250-960-5875; nolin@unbc.ca) or Greg Halseth (250-960-5826; halseth@unbc.ca) in the Geography Program at UNBC. Any complaints about this project should be directed to the UNBC Office of Research and Graduate Programs (250-960-5820; reb@unbc.ca).

We are grateful for you time and consideration, and thank you in advance for your participation in this important project.

Sincerely,

_____   _____

Catherine Nolin   Greg Halseth
Geography Program   Geography Program
UNBC   UNBC
3333 University Way   3333 University Way
Prince George, B.C   Prince George, B.C.
V2N 4Z9   V2N 4Z9
Phone: 250-960-5875   Phone: 250-960-5826
Email: nolin@unbc.ca   Email: halseth@unbc.ca

Marriage Migration in Northern British Columbia:
Place and Identity among Foreign Brides

Consent Form for Interviews

I agree that I have received and read the attached information sheet and I consent to participate in this research study. I understand that I will be interviewed and that the interview will be audio recorded only if I have given my pennission to do so. I understand that my participation in this research project is voluntary and so I do not have to participate or answer any questions if I choose not to. I understand that I am able to withdraw from the research study at any time without penalty. I understand that should I choose to withdraw from the study, that any information that I have already given will be destroyed. I understand that my interview responses will be kept confidential and that only the primary investigator, Courtney LeBourdais, and her thesis supervisor, Dr. Catherine Nolin, will have access to the information that I am providing. I understand that unless I request that my name be disclosed, that any information that I provide and that is included in research reports will be presented in a way that individuals and organizations cannot be identified. I understand that I will have the opportunity to review the information that is obtained from my interview in order to provide corrections or clarification as needed.

Participant: _____ Date:_____

Researcher: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 5: Consent Form for Photovoice Interview

UNBC *UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA*

3333 University Way, Prince George, B.C., Canada   V2N 4Z9

Dr. Catherine Nolin
Associate Professor
Geography Program

. Tel: (250) 960-5845
Fax: (250) 960-6533
Internet: www.unbc.ca/geography
Email : nolin@unbc.ca

Enhancing the Warmth of Welcome in the Communities
of British Columbia's Northern Region
Interview Consent Form

I agree that I have received and read the attached Information Sheet and I consent to participate in this research study. I understand that I will be required to take photographs and document information about the photographs in a journal. I understand that if my photographs include people other than myself, organizations, or companies, that I must have their permission to do so. I understand that I will be interviewed and that the interview will be audio recorded but only if I have given my permission to do so.
I understand that my participation in this research project is voluntary and so I do not have to participate or answer any questions if I choose not to. I understand that I am able to withdraw from the research study at any time without penalty and will be able to retain the digital camera and photographs that I have taken. I understand that should I choose to withdraw from the study, that any information that I have already given will be removed from the study database and destroyed. I understand that my interview responses, journal entries, and photographs will be kept confidential and that only the primary investigator and their research assistants will have access to the information that I am providing.

I understand that unless I request that my name be disclosed, that any information that I provide and that is included in research reports will be presented in a way that individuals and organizations cannot be identified. I understand that I will have the opportunity to review the information that is obtained from my interview in order to provide corrections or clarification as needed. I also understand that I will have the opportunity to select 1-2 photographs, in collaboration with the researcher, which will ensure that my anonymity and confidentiality is retained. Additionally, I understand that some of my photographs may be cropped or blurred to further ensure my privacy.

☐   I AGREE to allow the researcher to digitally record my interview.

☐   I DO NOT agree to have my interview digitally recorded.

Participant: _____   Date: _____
                         Signature

Researcher: _____   Date: _____
                         Signature

If you have any questions or concerns about this research project, please contact: Catherine Nolin (250-960-5875; nolin@unbc.ca) or Greg Halseth (250-960-5826; halseth@unbc.ca) in the Geography Program at the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC). Any complaints about this project should be directed to the UNBC Office of Research and Graduate Programs (250-960-5820; reb@unbc.ca).

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Appendix 6: Consent Form for Participant Photography

UNBC UNIVERSITY OF
NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA

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Associate Professor   Fax: (250) 960-6533
Geography Program   Internet: www.unbc.ca/geography
                                                    Email : nolin@unbc.ca

Enhancing the Warmth of Welcome in the Communities
of British Columbia's Northern Region

Purpose of study:

The purpose of this qualitative research project is to better understand the experiences of (im)migrant women, marriage, and migration, as well as their perception of living in a northern, rural, non-metropolitan environment by taking photographs.

A participant who is involved with this research project would like to take a photograph of you. It is your right to consent to or refuse to have your photograph taken. You are being asked to provide consent to have your picture taken and for this photograph to be used to help tell the participants story of marriage and migration in northern British Columbia. Participants, in collaboration with the research team, will choose 1-2 pictures for enlargement and mounting. This selection process will insure your confidentiality and anonymity is maintained and further, some photographs may be cropped or blurred to protect your privacy. The mounted photos will be put on display in the community and possibly in other exhibits, as opportunities arise. These pictures will be used to create discussion and to share the participants' thoughts, experiences, and perceptions of marriage migration northern British Columbia.

By signing below, you:

□   Are providing the participant with consent to take your photograph.

□   Understand that there may be a possibility that these pictures may be used publicly in a written report, presentation, research website or display.

□   Are aware that researchers will take steps to my privacy and confidentiality at all times.

Name of participant photographed: _____

Name to be used to identify participant: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Signature of parent or guardian: _____

(If participant is younger than 18 years old)

Name of person who obtained consent: _____

Signature: _____

If you have any questions or concerns about this research project, please contact: Catherine Nolin (250-960-5875; nolin@unbc.ca) or Greg Halseth (250-960-5826; halseth@unbc.ca) in the Geography Program at the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC). Any complaints about this project should be directed to the UNBC Office of Research and Graduate Programs (250-960-5820; reb@unbc.ca).

Appendix 7: Consent Form for Creative Materials Release

UNBC *UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA*

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Associate Professor
Geography Program

. Tel: (250) 960-5845
Fax: (250) 960-6533
Internet: www.unbc.ca/geography
Email: nolin@unbc.ca

Enhancing the Warmth of Welcome in the Communities of British Columbia's Northern Region

Consent form and the Release of Creative Materials

By participating in this research project you will have taken numerous photographs of your experiences with marriage and migration, as well as your perceptions of living in a northern, rural, non-metropolitan environment.

By signing this consent form, I agree that I have received and read the attached information sheet and that I consent to participate in this research study. I understand that I have taken photographs and have documented information about the photographs in a journal.

☐ I understand that my participation in this research project is voluntary and so I do not have to participate or answer any questions if I choose not to. I understand that I am able to withdraw from the research study at any time without penalty. I understand that should I choose to withdraw from the study, that any information that I have already given will be destroyed.

☐ I understand that I will be interviewed regarding the content of my photographs and that the interview will be audio recorded only if I have given my permission to do so. I understand that unless I request that my name be disclosed, that any information that I provide and that is included in research reports will be presented in a way that individuals and organizations cannot be identified. I understand that I will have the opportunity to review the information that is obtained from my interview in order to provide corrections or clarification as needed.

☐ I understand that my interview responses, journal entries, and photographs will be kept confidential and that only the primary investigator and their research assistants will have access to the information that I am providing.

☐ I understand that photos selected in collaboration with the researcher will be used for academic purposes, such as in presentations, exhibitions, journal articles, reports, and/ or other academic documents only with my consent.

☐ I understand that if I would like the researcher to use one of my photos for the aforementioned purposes, which includes people other than myself, an organization, or and/or company, that I must have their permission to do so. I understand that if I would like to use a photograph publicly that includes a person(s) who is under the age of 18, that I must have written consent from their parent or guardian to do so.

Name of participant: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Researcher: _____

If you have any questions or concerns about this research project, please contact: Catherine Nolin (250-960-5875; nolin@unbc.ca) or Greg Halseth (250-960-5826; halseth@unbc.ca) in the Geography Program at the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC). Any complaints about this project should be directed to the UNBC Office of Research and Graduate Programs (250-960-5820; reb@unbc.ca).

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Courtney LeBourdais,
MA Candidate in NRES
Geography Program

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Marriage Migration in Northern British Columbia:
Place and Identity among Foreign Brides

Interviewee Name: _____
Name to be used to identify participant within the research project: _____
Community: _____ Facilitator: _____
Date: _____ Place: _____
Interview Time- Start: _____ Finish: _____
Contact Information for Giveback: _____

_____

_____

1.) Go through information sheet
2.) Obtain consent (either signed or verbal- on digital recorder)
3.) Identification:
  "For this project, you have the choice of participating anonymously (using a name of your choice) or using your real name. Once we complete the questions, I will ask you again which you would prefer."
4.) Start recorder: 'hold' = on/off; 'record/pause' = start or pause; 'stop' = stop

Section A: Life in the Community

A1. How long have you lived in [community name]

A2. Is that how long you have lived in Canada?

A3. Where did you emigrate from?

A4. How did you make the decision to come to Canada?

A5. When you first arrived to [community name], what was a typical day like for you?

A6. How has your typical day changed now that you have been living in [Community name and duration of residency]?
[*i.e. job, activities, church, ect.*]

A7. Can you talk a bit more about your experiences living in northern B.C specifically?
[*i.e. employment, educational opportunities, climate, variety of food and services, opportunities for your children, credential recognition, integration into the community ect.*]

Section B: Background Information

B1. How old are you?

| <18 | 19-29 | 30-34 | 35-39 | 40-44 | 45-49 | 50+ |

B2. Are you married?

B3. How did you meet your husband?

B4. Where did you get married?

B5. Do you have any children?
[*If yes, how old and how many?*]

B6. Can you explain your migration process?

B7. Did you have a choice in locating in [community name]?
[*i.e. recognition of rights- as some women make an informed decision to come; are you now aware of your rights that you have?*]

Section C: Transnational Experiences

C1. Can you tell me about what life in [country name] was like?
[*i.e. education, employment, ect.*]

C2. What sorts of hobbies and activities did you most enjoy while living in [country name]?

C3. How did you become involved in the relationship with your husband?

C4. How did your family feel when you decided to migrate to Canada?

C5. Do you still keep in contact with family and friends in [country name]?
[*i.e. Remittances*]

C6. What do you miss most about [country name]?

C7. Have you been able to visit [country's name] or have your friends and family been able to visit Canada?

Section D: Canadian Experiences

D1. How did you feel about moving to Canada?

D2. Have these feelings changed over the [amount of time] that you have lived in Canada?

D3. Does Canada feel like home to you or do you still recognize [country name] to be home?
[*Or, is it both places?*]

D4. Do you feel as though you have change since moving to Canada, and if so, how have you changed?
[*i.e. Clothing, language, attitude*]

D5. Did keeping in contact with friends or family (or not keeping in contact) help you to feel more settled in Canada?

D6. Do you find living in [community name] challenging, if so, how?
[*i.e. Services, shopping, language barriers, education, employment, integration*]

D7a. Do you know of other women who have come to Canada in a situation similar to yours?
[Or different from your experience, as there are many different ways that people come to the country: MOB, correspondence brides, internet brides, arranged marriages]

D7b. Can you talk about their experiences?
[*Could you comment on what you know to be the issues foreign brides face?*]

D8a. Are there issues that immigrant women are facing in this community? What are they?

D9b. Are you facing similar issues?

Section E: Support Services in the Community

E1. During the migration process, did you seek anyone's help?
[*i.e. Social networks, formal supports, ethnic communities in the region*]

E2. Can you offer any suggestions for improving services in the community?

E3. Did you feel like if you needed help, that you were able to get it in [community name]?

Section F: Concluding Questions

F1. Is there anything that you would like to add that we haven't already talked about?

F2. Do you know of any other women who might like to talk to with us about their experience of marriage and migration to northern British Columbia?

F3. Would you like us to use your real name or a name of your choice for the results of our study?
Preferred name: _____

F4. How would you like to be identified in the report findings?
[*i.e. foreign bride, mail-order bride, internet bride, correspondence bride*]

Preferred term: _____

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Enhancing the Warmth of Welcome in Communities of British Columbia's Northern Region

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Interviewee Name: _____

Name to be used to identify participant within the research project: _____

Community: _____ Facilitator: _____

Date: _____ Place: _____

Interview Time- Start: _____ Finish: _____

Contact Information for Giveback: _____

_____

_____

_____

1.) Go through information sheet
2.) Obtain consent (either signed or verbal- on digital recorder)
3.) Identification:
   "For this project, you have the choice of participating anonymously (using a name of your choice) or using your real name. Once we complete the questions, I will ask you again which you would prefer."
4.) Start recorder: 'hold' = on/off; 'record/pause' = start or pause; 'stop' = stop

Section A: Discussion of Photographs and Journal Entries

A1. How did you feel about photography component of the project?

A2. What did you find challenging?

A3. Do you feel like your photographs capture your experiences?

A4. Which picture(s) do you like the most? Why?

A5. Which picture(s) do you like the least? Why?

A6. Can you discuss how taking the photographs made you feel?

A7. Were there pictures that you felt uncomfortable taking or did not take at all?

A8. Did taking a photograph of [object] change the way that you looked at the [object]?

A9. What motivated you to take a certain photograph?

A10. What does the photograph mean to you?
[Does it illustrate a specific theme, idea, or issue?]

A11. If you could provide a name(s) for the photograph(s), what would it be? Why?
[What theme, issue, or ideas is represented?]

Section B: Concluding Questions
B1. Is there anything you would like to add that we have not already talked about?

B2. Do you know of any other women who might like to talk with us about their experiences with marriage and migration to northern BC?

B3: Would you like us to use your real name or a name of your choice for the results of our study?

B4: How would you like to be identified in the report findings?