THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF "CAMP WIVES" IN NORTHWESTERN BC

by

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Abstract

This study explored the lived experiences of camp wives, with children less than five years of age, from the northwestern British Columbian communities of Hazelton, Smithers, and Terrace. The women's domestic partners work away in resource extraction labour camps for a minimum two week period. The purpose of this study centred on exploring the everyday lived experiences of the women as they are affected by their partners' work and furlough schedule in order to bring to the fore the under-acknowledged and under-studied context of life for northern BC women. A qualitative research approach, interpretative phenomenological analysis, explored the commonalities and variances of their subjective experiences. Feminist, critical, and ecological systems theories guided the research. A semi-structured interview schedule was used to collect information on the women's varied life world domains: individual, camp wife, social roles, children, and community. The research findings indicated the women have experiences relating to migration, normalization of camp life, camp culture, and consideration of a future in long-distance labour commuting. Furthermore, adaptive processes relating to the work/furlough camp schedule, entry into and motherhood in the lifestyle, and observing the children adjustment were pertinent to the women. Women also described new and negotiated roles in the camp lifestyle relating to being the nucleus of the family and career women and mothers. The women faced implications of gender roles and personal sacrifice to maintain the lifestyle. Over time women gained a sense of living in separate life worlds to their husbands. A future in the camp lifestyle is highly plausible for the women as they see the financial benefit to camp work. They also note other limited employment options for working class labourers in the region.

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Dedication

To all of the working class women in northern BC, past and present: may your dedication to supporting your families, communities, industry, and northern BC society not go unnoticed. You are the foundation that has built, maintained, and continue to support the well-being and development of the region.

Chapter One: Introduction

The oil, gas, and mineral extraction sectors constitute the "main economic driver[s] of the northern region [of British Columbia (B.C)]" (Northern Development Ministers' Forum, n.d., pp. 1). In this sector, the use of work camps and a remotely located work force engaged in long-distance labour commuting (LDC) is a sector norm (McGillvray, 2005). LDC employment is used in exploration, construction, and operational resource extraction activities (Community Development Institute (CDI), 2015). The use of LDC labourers provides industry with a flexible and mobile workforce. This workforce is used for temporary large scale industrial projects; to accommodate labourers in remote settings, at times without road access; and in small communities without the infrastructure to accommodate a large increase of resident workers (CDI, 2015). LDC employment requires extended absences by workers from their home communities and families; overwhelmingly, these workers are male. Workers in LDC employment are employed in occupations, such as: professional, semi-skilled/skilled, trades, management, and coordination (Gallegos, 2006). There is a lack of research exploring the experiences of women as the partners who remain at home while their husband works away for extended periods in a labour camp.

Within public sector and academic research on LDC employment, there is a significant focus on regional and community development, psychosocial and occupational health matters relating to the workers, as well as the male workers' perspectives on the context (Barton, 2002; Goldenberg, Shoveller, Ostry, & Koehoorn, 2008; Halseth & Ryser, 2004; Hoath & Halsam McKenzie, 2013; Northern Health Authority (NHA), 2012a; NHA, 2012b; Peace River Regional District, 2013; Ryser, Markey, & Halseth, 2016; Ryser, Schwamborn, Halseth, & Markey, 2011; Storey, 2010; Watts, 2004). Most research on LDC is based on the Australian context.

Academic and community-based quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods research studies on LDC employment have considered the perspectives and implications of this context on the female partners and the workers' families (Gallegos, 2006; Hubinger, Parker, & Clavarino, 2002; Kaczmarek & Sibbel, 2008; Pini & Mayes, 2012; Sibbel, 2010; Taylor & Simmonds, 2009; Watts, 2004; Whalen, 2013). These studies provide some insight into the context for the female stay-in-home-community partners pointing to themes on: role expectations, gender roles, suitability, transition, change, adaptability, family life cycle, workload, stress, formal and informal supports, benefits, and challenges (Gallegos, 2006; Pini & Mayes, 2012; Taylor & Simmonds, 2009; Whalen, 2013). More specifically, women with young children under the age of five have unique challenges, adaptation, service needs, and daily lived experiences (Pini & Mayes, 2012; Taylor & Simmonds, 2009; Whalen, 2013). However, the lived experiences of these women are understudied and at present no research exists on these women in northern BC. Furthermore, there are no studies on the lived experiences of working class women from the northwestern BC communities of Hazelton, Smithers, and Terrace, BC, whose domestic partner engages in LDC employment while she remains at home.

Study Purpose and Research Question

Building on the work of Gallegos (2006), Hubinger et al., (2002), Kaczmarek and Sibbel (2008), Pini and Mayes (2012), Sibbel (2010), Taylor and Simmonds (2009), Watts (2004), and Whalen (2013) this study explored how women with young children, whose domestic partner works away in camp for extended periods of time (at least 2 weeks away), understood their life world. In particular, it explored participants' experiences in or as affected by their partners' work and furlough rotation schedule. As the researcher, I sought to describe "the commonalities and differences between their subjective experiences" (Lopez & Willis, 2004, p. 730). The study was

limited to women a minimum of 20 years old who have (a) child(ren) less than five years of age and who stay at home during their partner's work rotation. Women were from the communities of Hazelton, Smithers, and Terrace, BC. The women identified as working class. An exploration of women's working class identity is further explored below.

The objectives of this study were to: (1) bring to the fore the under-acknowledged and under-studied context of life for northern BC women; (2) provide an opportunity for the women to articulate and explore their unique personal experiences within this employment context and lifestyle; (3) describe the divergent and intersectional experiences of the women and thus provide them with the opportunity to find solidarity in, or at minimum, support the normalization of their experiences; and; (4) provide the research findings to the participants, communities, and any interested civil society organizations for further reflection, discussion, and possible future research. The research question to meet the study objectives was: How do women with children less than five years of age make sense of their experience as the domestic partner who remains at home while their partner is away at a work camp?

To follow is a description of my personal standpoint in the research as it concerns my background, relationship to, and personal perspective on the research topic. This was particularly relevant for me to consider as I utilized an interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) research approach in the study. In particular, use of IPA highlights the importance of "making preconceptions explicit and explaining how they are being used in the inquiry" (Lopez & Willis, 2004, p. 730). As such, being honest and aware of my positioning in the inquiry was vital to the research. My personal standpoint will be followed by the literature review. The literature review will provide an exploration of the pertinent concepts related to the topic in order to provide for a

holistic understanding of the women's context. There will then be a review of the research design, followed by the findings, and a discussion.

Personal Standpoint of Researcher

I hold a personal and professional connection to this topic as a woman from Hazelton, BC, a community in the northwest of the province that is heavily dependent on LDC employment; an individual who has worked two summers as an LDC employee; as a partner to a (former) LDC worker; a daughter and granddaughter to LDC workers; and as a future social worker supporting individuals in this employment context. I am also working class and a feminist. At this time in my life I exist on the border between insider and outsider in relation to the women in this study. I was raised in Hazelton, BC in a working class family. I left after high school and returned to the region 13 years later. I gained post-secondary education, traveled and lived extensively throughout the world, and obtained professional experiences. I am unmarried and do not have children. My engagement in this research topic was impacted by my processes of self-identity and cultural articulation in my ongoing reintegration into northern BC society.

Through the research process, it was my intent to gain insight and entry into my world as I explored my current interconnected understanding of self, others, and northern BC culture (Chang, 2008). I then had the opportunity to study others who were both similar and different and thus gained valuable insight about self and others within a cultural sense (Chang, 2008). Chang (2005) articulates that certain forces shape one's understanding of self and others, these include: "nationality, religion, gender, education, ethnicity, socioeconomic class, and geography. Understanding [these factors]…[supports one to] examine their preconceptions and feelings about others, whether they are 'others of similarity', 'others of difference', or even 'others of opposition'" (as cited in Chang, 2008, p. 52). I would also add that one's life experiences, such

as education and travel as well as propensity for self-reflection and personal growth are important 'forces'. I believe that I belong to a number of cultural groups: working class, rural, northern BC, world traveler and former expatriate. Women in the study and I shared some intersecting facets of identity. We are women, working class, educated and career focused, from northern BC culture, worked in camp, and/or had our partner work in camp. However, our unique experiences to date also informed our differences in this context.

As I approached the research inside (and also outside) of this paradigm, I continuously reflected on how I was "historically and locally situated with the very process being studied. A gendered, historical self is [and will be] brought to this process" (Denzin, 2010, p. 23). This was particularly relevant as I consider myself an 'edge-walker' between my childhood rural culture and my educated, traveled self who has been re-integrating into northern rural culture (Chang, 2008). I was aware that a "set of shifting identities, [the self], has its own history with the situated practice that define[s] and shape[s] the public issues and private troubles being studied" (Denzin, 2010, p. 23). Mindfulness was key. In particular as I had and continue to work through a form of internalized oppression whereby I am challenged to hold respect for women who decided to stay in my community and take on traditional gender roles. This same internalized oppression applies to my identity as working class. I used a feminist perspective in my research process, it was important to recognize that acting on internalized oppression could have resulted in the "reproduc[tion] [of] the social, economic, and political system that formed us" (Bishop, 2002) as oppressed people. Therefore, I sought to build and maintain respect, equalized relationships, and an understanding with the women in the study. In this process I gained insight into my perception of self as a woman with a working class and rural identity. Consider the following literature review as it explores the context of northern BC women.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

The intention of this literature review is to shed light on the context of life for camp wives in northern BC. This will be achieved through an exploration of the context of rural northern BC women. I will then provide a review of the LDC employment in terms of its history in Canada as well as its history and current status in northern BC. Building on this, I will provide findings from studies on women, male workers, domestic partners, children, and communities. I will then provide a brief description of the northern BC region and the study communities of Terrace, Smithers, and Hazelton. This study is informed by ecological systems, feminist, and critical thought. Ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bronfenbrenner, 1986) is a "useful framework for examining relationships among work, community, and family systems…[and in particular, the] patterns of activities, roles, and interpersonal relations experienced" (Voydanoff, 2004, pp. 7-8). Feminist and critical perspectives indicate that the women's lives, experiences, and opportunities are shaped by, economic, social, class, and patriarchal private to public constructs (Creese & Strong-Boag, 2005; Dolan & Thien, 2008; Dunk, 2003; Fiske et al., 2012; Leipert & Reuter, 2005; Little, 2002; Little & Austin, 1996; Peters et al., 2010; Reed, 2003a; Reed, 2003b; Reed, 2005; Schmidt, 2000; Sutherns, McPhedran, & Haworth-Brockman, 2004; Waring, 1999). In this consideration, the literature review looks at the multi-systemic and intersectional aspects of women's lives in northern BC. It is also important to note that I recognize there is plurality in the subjective experience of working class women (Casey, 2003). In the table below are definitions for key terms used in this study.

Table 1

Key Terms

Term	Definition
Child care	the care of children by "an organisation or individual trained in the provision of such care in exchange for money [or] [i]nformal childcare…services provided by family…[and/or] friends who are not necessarily trained in the provision of childcare" (Gallegos, 2006, p. viii).
Community	"the social and geographic framework within which individuals experience and conduct most of their day-to-day functions" (Halseth & Sullivan, 2002, p. 6). Community is both the "people and the places where they live" (Halseth & Sullivan, 2002, p. 4).
Community (host)	the region or community proximal to the LDC worksite (Storey, 2010).
Community (source)	distant communities or regions from where the workforce is drawn (Storey, 2010).
(Domestic) partner	individuals engaged in a romantic, husband-and-wife like relationship.
Formal and informal care support and/or services	paid or unpaid services to sustain and support the individual, children, family, community, and/or society (Waring, 1999). It includes social and nurturing work, such as: childcare; social and health services; medical care; psychotherapeutic support; food housework; caregiving for the sick, disable, and/or elderly; and volunteerism (Waring, 1999).
Furlough	"the scheduled period off work" (Gallegos, 2006, p. viii) from camp, during which the worker can return to his home community and family.
(Industrial) camp	a remote workplace setting where workers live and work away from their families and communities for extended periods of time (Hoath & Haslam McKenzie, 2013). Living accommodations include anything from tents, RVs, simple wooden structures, to more permanent buildings and trailers (NHA, 2012a).
Long-distance labour commuting (LDC)	employment that is typically physically isolated where "food and accommodation are provided for [workers] at the work site, and [employees work] rosters…[of] a fixed number of days at the site, followed by a fixed number of days at home" (Storey & Shrimpton, 1989, p. 2).
Rotation	a set period of time away at work, typically ranging from 21-28 days of 12-18 hour shifts (Goldenberg et al., 2008). It can be as long as 42 days in camp with 14 days off work (Barton, 2002).

Working class	defined broadly by occupation, education, and socio-cultural characteristics (Porter, 1965). Working class labourers sell their manual or skilled trade labour as either an employee or contractor. Professions include "skilled or semi-skilled [occupations, for example] mine/rig workers such as drillers, process technicians, production operators, shot firers, riggers, pressure testers, water truck drivers; [and]… trade[s] [based occupations] such as electricians, auto electricians, mechanics, welders" (Gallegos, 2006, p. 11). Working class also includes "various cultural phenomena in an oppositional struggle with the dominant culture which reflects the values and interests of the bourgeoisie….[it] is not viewed as a mere expression of economic interests" (Dunk, 2003, p. 21). The working class also includes women whose identities are shaped by working class economics, culture, and politics (Dunk, 2003).

Characteristics of Life for Rural Northern BC Women

The context of life for working class women in rural, northern BC touches on the intersecting aspects of women's lives and identity. It considers gender identity construction, working class identity, northern BC culture and social processes, and women's well-being and access to services. Influencing this context are geography and place-based aspects of community. A review of the characteristics of these women's lives considers their private/individual and family lives, kinship and other social relationships; caregiving; dense social relationships; and northern BC cultural norms of self-reliance, mutuality, and connectedness to community (Little, 2002; Little & Austin, 1996; McLeod & Hovorka, 2008, Midgley, 2006; Ni Laoire, 2007; Peters et al., 2010; Reed, 2003a; Reed, 2003b; Reed, 2005; Sutherns et al., 2004). To follow is discussion on the gender and identity construction for rural northern BC women.

Gender and identity construction. Gender norms and relations in rural society delineate the function and expectations of rural women and inform their identity (Little, 2002). Traditionally, rural communities have ascribed to a traditional social norm of conventional male and female identities, heterosexuality, the nuclear family, and traditional male/female family roles for the maintenance of rural society (Little, 2002; Ni Laoire, 2007). Beyond construction of gender characteristics for men and women, this paradigm informs "relationships, practices and processes that give meaning to gender constructs (Brandth & Haugen, 2000 as cited in Reed, 2003a, p.379; Connell, 1995). Typically, compliance with traditional gender characteristics predicates belonging in the rural community (Little, 2002). This places emphasis on the "conventional family roles of women and men and on the economic and social relations which support them" (Little, 2002, p. 41). A failure to meet these characteristics and expectations can result in a woman's ostracism and marginalization in the community (Little 2002). This persistent, "dominant ideology…locates women's 'rightful' place to be the home and contributes to a relative[ly] [confined identity and opportunity for women]" (Reed, 2003, p. 377). Given this, "[f]amily well-being remains the responsibility of women, while political power over resource allocation still rests largely in male hands" (Sutherns et al., 2004, p. 10). Communities where resource extraction constitutes the predominant livelihood have impacted women's experiences with traditional gender roles.

Reed (2003a) studied the experiences of women in rural, northern Vancouver Island, who participated in and/or whose domestic partner participated in the forest industry. The author found the woman challenged yet reinforced traditional gender roles, associated with the occupational identity of their partner, and also experienced sexism and accompanying limitations. In the study, women "identified themselves within 'traditional' feminine

relationships, such as helpmates and wives" (Reed, 2003a, p. 384). As a result a "maternal role remain[ed] an important self-referent, providing guidance to separate the appropriate attitudes and activities associated [with it]" (Reed, 2005, p. 375). By ascribing to these roles, women engaged less in traditionally, male dominated activities and were segregated from those associated spaces. For example, this meant their decreased and limited participation in forestry sector employment as they viewed themselves as unfit to perform 'dangerous', physically demanding tasks. From a structural perspective, limited access to childcare, transportation, and employment opportunities have been influencing factors for women to remain at home while their children are young (Little & Austin, 1996). The women in the study held identities closely connected to their male partners' occupations.

Many women co-constructed their identity with traditional masculinity and "men's work". In Reed (2003a), women's shared interest in and support of forestry further embedded them in the forestry community culture. Further to this point, the women strongly endorsed their partners' work "in forestry and/or the forest industry more broadly…some women even celebrated the characteristics of masculinity that define forestry culture and effectively eliminated equal opportunities for women in forestry employment. Consequently, and perhaps inadvertently, they reinforced their own marginality" (Reed, 2003a, p. 375). Yet the women in this study also shared a dichotomous identification with and converse awareness of their oppression by a patriarchal social structure. The women described experiences of sexism and exclusion from male dominated forestry sector employment. Women were simultaneously pushed to the edge of this culture "by structural and patriarchal norms within the industry and within the communities" (Reed, 2003a, p. 386). The result of this context perseveres today in many rural, northern BC resource-based communities. To build insight into the lives of northern

BC women, a discussion follows on working class women as well as the cultural context of women in rural resource based communities.

Working class women in northern BC. Rural, single industry communities are socially and economically organized around what are traditionally considered male dominated industries (Schmidt, 2000). As such, women in northern BC exist within a resource extraction sector dominated systemically, publicly, and privately by a priority on men's labour and needs (Dunk, 2003; Reed, 2003a; Reed, 2003b; Reed, 2005; Schmidt, 2000). Historically, men have almost exclusively been the paid labour force in primary industries (Dunk, 2003; Reed, 2003a; Reed, 2003b). The result has been a sexual division of labour in the rural working class (Dunk, 2003, Reed, 2003a; Reed, 2003b). Recent government statistics elaborated on the context of paid employment and traditional gender roles of northern rural Canadian women. Statistics Canada data indicated that resoundingly "women living in rural and remote areas have lower [paid] labour force participation rates, lower employment rates, and are over-represented in low-income situations" (Status of Women Canada, 2013, p. 1). Rural women have been under-represented in non-traditional occupations, such as in the primary resource sector, in comparison to their male counterparts (Status of Women Canada, 2013). To understand women's location in working class society in northern BC requires a review of class.

The concept of class is historically articulated in terms of labour division and control over the means of production. Capitalist, patriarchal ideology defines labour as activities producing monetary, surplus value in the marketplace. As such, labour that does not provide monetary gains (profits) has not been considered part of production (Waring, 1999). The historical development of Western resource economies has led to the separation of women's (unpaid) and men's (paid) labour resulting in traditional gender roles of male breadwinner and female

domestic worker and caregiver (Lewis, 2002; Waring, 1999). Brown (1974) expanded a definition of class as more than "Marx's definition of relationship to the means of production. Class involves your behavior, what you expect from yourself and from others, your concept of a future, how you understand problems and solve them, how you think, feel, act" (p. 15). Class is at once related to an individual's and/or their family of origin's occupation and also their epistemology and related behaviour, life choices, and life opportunities (or absence of) (Brown, 1974; Fay & Tokarczyk, 1993; hooks, 1984). Class is also shaped by geographical location; placement in the global economy; communal affiliation, such as race or ethnicity; gender role expectations; and personal status, such as age, marital status, reproductive status, sexual orientation, and dis/ability (Dhruvarajan & Vickers, 2002).

In this context, women's labour outside of the monetary market economy is typically undervalued and invisible work (Ferguson & Hennessy, 2010; hooks, 1984). However, Reid (1934) stated that any productive activity a woman engages in that generates services or products that can be replaced through paid labour denotes its value as labour that can be remunerated in the market place. Women are vital and majority contributors of unpaid labour, which supports and sustains family, community, society, and the economic system (Waring, 1999). Women's unpaid labour typically consists of duties that exist within various systems, such as family, domestic, and community spheres. This includes, but is not limited to: housework; reproduction; child care; educating; nurturing; caregiving for the sick, disabled, and/or elderly; volunteerism; growing, gathering, and processing food; informal economic activity: bartering, the social exchange of services; and more (MacDonald, Phipps, & Lethbridge, 2005; Waring, 1999). As a result of their higher workload and responsibility with their partners away in camp, women experience higher stress than their partners (MacDonald et al., 2005). Furthermore, in periods of

economic decline associated with the "boom-bust" economy of rural communities, there is increased pressure on women to take on additional unpaid, care giving work. In these economic downturns, the insufficient public services provided to northern communities are further diminished resulting in an "increased reliance on familial and volunteer care" (Peters et al., 2010, p. 183), which is primarily conducted by women.

A study on the importance of women's care giving labour in the face of service reduction in four northern BC resources communities: Quesnel, Prince George, Fraser Lake, and Prince Rupert provides further insight into women's unpaid labour in the region. Women in the study engaged in highly relational work supporting the social well-being of community members (Fiske et al., 2012). The women's work was heavily tied to social belonging and citizenship. The women found "it difficult to draw boundaries around the multiple volunteer roles, family needs, and interdependence with friends and relatives" (p.409). In addition, the women dichotomously indicated that although care giving labour was gendered in nature they "rejected the conceptual frameworks that implied they were subordinated as a consequence of caring and refused to accept their care giving as primarily a burden" (Fiske et al., 2012, p. 414). The women in the study stated that men typically played ancillary vis-à-vis direct care giving roles (Fiske et al., 2012). Women's heavy care giving obligations have also resulted in significant time deficiency, which necessitated balancing (or neglecting) caregiving responsibilities in the community and at home, meeting the expectations of others, and experiencing physical exhaustion and burn-out (Peters et al., 2010). However, research by Halseth and Ryser (2004) and McLeod and Hovorka (2008) offers a differing perspective on the experiences and opportunities of women in the social and economic context of northern BC.

In a study on gender at home and work and the household economy, Halseth and Ryser (2004) described an evolving context for women in McKenzie and Tumbler Ridge, BC, two rural northern BC resource communities. The authors suggested that a rigid, traditional gender binary relegating women into care giving and the domestic sphere does not account for their multifaceted and textured experience. Women's experience in rural, resource extraction communities is nuanced and complex. In northern BC, it has been variously impacted by their participation, roles, and choices as well as accelerated economic, political and social restructuring in the region (Halseth & Ryser, 2004). Women played an important role in the uptake of employment during times of economic bust. This resulted in a restructuring of households which were increasingly dual income; men and women were thus more likely to share parenting responsibilities (Halseth & Ryser, 2004). Building on this, McLeod and Hovorka (2008) described employment for women in the transitioning rural resource economy of High Level, Alberta. The authors' findings indicated positive developments for the status of women in terms of their inclusion in the community. The authors noted the quantity and variety of formal employment opportunities were increasing for women. In addition, women indicated their experiences in the community were positive. In particular, they were building a sense of connection to place, which was related to their multiple roles within employment, personal, and civic domains (McLeod & Hovorka, 2008). However, in spite of change for women in transitioning rural resource communities, lingering notions of traditional gender roles and patriarchy continue on in resource communities (Halseth & Ryser, 2004). Despite advances for women in their participation in the paid workforce they continue to contribute disproportionately to unpaid labour (Fiske et a., 2012; Lewis, 2002). Women's social position is often attached to their provision of care giving and nurturing work in both private and public contexts.

Northern BC culture and social processes. Northern BC culture has been described as grounded in self-reliance and independence, social proximity, belonging, mutuality, and traditional values. In this region a "mythology" of the north is predominant in which the notion of "independence and [a] frontier spirit figures prominently" (Northern Secretariat of the BC Centre of Excellence for Women's Health , n.d., p. 22). Rural residents often share a common perception of their way of life as traditional, honest, friendly, authentic, and practical thus inspiring simple, genuine relations (Little, 2002). Therein "rural communities tend to interweave a strong ethic of self-sufficiency and a belief that family issues are [to be managed] as private matters" (Hornosty & Doherty, 2003, p. 47). A culture of self-reliance, -efficacy, and –determination also results in northern residents often minimizing their struggles and focus on self-management of social and health concerns (Page-Carruth, Windsor, & Clark, 2014). This pioneer spirit is also bolstered in that "[s]elf-reliance is not only expected of rural people but is also a feature of the capacity to live and work in an environment with fewer support services" (Page-Carruth et al., 2014, p. 1). Rural social relations are constructed within an embedded, mostly uncontested hierarchy in which there is a "firm in the belief that there is a 'natural order' within the rural community" (Little, 2002, p. 83). Geography and population size also impact northern BC culture.

The physical distance, social proximity, and a continual dearth of services contribute to a culture of independence, resilience, mutuality, and traditional gender roles. Mutuality is expressed by women describing their care giving labour in relationship to citizenship; they place emphasis on their commitment to community (Fiske et al., 2012). Women in northern BC also experience physical isolation due to the geographic context of the region. Women feel further isolated in winter months due to the poor road conditions, long distances to central communities

and/or neighbors, and the presence of large transport trucks on roads (Leipert & Reutter, 2005). Despite physical distance in rural communities, close social proximity is characteristic of their communities.

Social proximity indicates the degree to which individuals in a community know each other and their collective histories and current personal information. Parr and Philo (2003) described social proximity in rural communities as such that "neighbours five miles apart might know intimately each other's personal histories and biographies, family relationships, and so on" (p. 475). The authors also added that the "genealogy of an individual and their family is something collectively known, placed, remembered and narrated by other community members, especially those who have long links with the area and residents in question" (p. 475). A more socially proximate community results in high visibility in terms of members' day-to-day lives and activities (Parr & Philo, 2003). A high level of familiarity in the community can lead to "gossip, fear of difference and cultural stoicism" (Parr & Philo, 2003, p. 480). Gossip is also known to hold an important social control function in rural societies. Gossip ensures that traditional values and norms are not readily deviated from and thus the social order is maintained (Collier, 2006). Social control suggests that belonging requires suppression of individuality as this can create tension between one's hope for belonging in the community and also autonomy. A decrease in anonymity can manifest into lost independence, in particular for women (Ni Laoire, 2007, p.341). High visibility in rural communities can leave women feeling stigmatized and reluctant to access services. For example, when one's car is parked outside of a women's resource centre or counseling office, those that drive by are free to make assumptions and talk about the real or imagined situation of a particular woman. Conversely, dense social relations permit community members to quickly respond to support each other in times of need (Leipert &

George, 2008). Members will be quick to learn when someone is in need and requires support. Tight social relationships are important to rural communities to create a sense of support and belonging (Little, 2002).

Rural women's lives are often complexly and heavily integrated in to the multiple layers of the community in which "family, place, and lifestyle were intimately interwoven" (Reed, 2005, p. 23). In a very potent way, the connection between community and the family underscores the development and function, in general, of rural society relations (Little, 2002). This resulted in the extension of their traditional, maternal identity and gender roles extending from individual to community roles and responsibilities. Women related their support of family, kin, and the greater community as aligning with "northern community spirit" (Fiske, et al., 2012; Peters, et al., 2010). Women are often heavily involved in community activities, such as a variety of fundraising activities, non-profit societies, event organizing, and clubs; they play an important role in the social fabric of their communities (Little & Austin, 1996). Rural women have described these activities as highly relational-based and giving them a sense of community, belonging, appreciation, and citizenship (Leipert & George, 2008; Peters et al., 2010). Sutherns et al. (2004), found in a study of rural Canadian women that "[m]any women praised the health benefits derived from the social capital in their communities" (p. 8). However, challenges also exist within this paradigm.

Some women are stymied in their efforts to belong to rural communities. Failing to fulfill traditional gender roles, for example not having children, can hamper one's opportunities for social connectedness. Little (2002) found in rural communities that the

> valuing of motherhood…[was] a powerful element of the social and cultural construction of rurality, [which] raised] questions about the position of rural

> women who through either choice or circumstance [we]re childless…There can be some suspicion surrounding the motives of younger and middle-aged single women deciding to live in the countryside (p. 90).

These women can be viewed as oddities or threats to the social fabric of the community; for some women they are seen as a threat to the security of their domestic partnerships. Therefore, integration into a rural community is tied to women's "active involvement in and support for a culture of traditional family life" (Little, 2002, p. 91). Women new to or newly returned to their home rural communities have described feeling as an outsider "because they now subscribe to different norms and values" (Leipert & Reutter, 2005, p. 245). Insider status can be gained by marrying an insider and accepting community norms, values, culture, and political awareness; however, this is not an absolute (Leipert & Reutter, 2005). The result of holding outsider status is that these women "experience more limited employment opportunities, social isolation, and marginalization than women who are perceived as insiders" (Leipert & Reutter, 2005, p. 245). To follow is review of rural women's well-being and access to services.

Women's well-being and access to services. Research on rural Canadian women's perceptions of the health presents advantages and disadvantages. In a study on rural Canadian women, it was found that higher food costs, substandard housing, a lack of public transportation, long distances to access health services, the impact of winter weather conditions, and lower quality and insufficient quantity of health services negatively impacted women's health and well-being (Bourgeault, White, & Hashmani, 2004). Alternatively, women also identified rural communities as positively impacting their well-being due to: access to nature, free to low cost recreation, lower levels of pollution and resultant good air quality, an emphasis on and access to family, a more connected and caring community, easier access to social supports, lower crime

rates, and a slower pace of life (Bourgeault et al., 2004; Leipert & George, 2008). Consider more on the service context of rural communities as it impacts women.

In rural communities "access to health care, education, counselling, affordable housing and other social services may be minimal. Public transportation and licensed childcare is often inadequate or non-existent" (Hornosty & Doherty, 2003, pp.40-41). Women's quality of life is affect by limited services, which "constrain women's abilities to obtain resources that could support them in employment, personal situations, and family relationships" (Leipert & Reutter, 2005, p 248). In addition to the quantity of service concerns quality concerns have also been pertinent. Quality concerns centre on physicians and health care providers who are burnt out, lack knowledge of women's health issues, are patronizing to rural women, are too close to one's personal network, and lack confidentiality, commitment, and continuity in care (Bourgeault et al., 2004). In northern BC, women have had experiences with health and social service providers, who come to rural communities for employment, higher pay, and career advancement and then eventually leave the region. The quality of rural health services has also been characterized as insufficiently focusing on prevention and health promotion (Leipert & George, 2008). Rather, health services have been found to "focus excessively on women's reproductive needs, with inadequate attention to other aspects of women's health" (Leipert & George, 2008, pp. 213-214). In addition, as health care services are highly centralized in Canada, rural women are often faced with long travel and related expenses to see specialists (Leipert & George, 2008). Adding to this context of service provision, rural women indicated a sense of being invisible to or misunderstood by urban policy makers (Sutherns et al., 2004). Conversely, rural women have positively indicated lower wait times at hospitals, ease in obtaining an appointment with their family doctor, and a more familiar relationship with health care providers in northern BC

(Bourgeault et al., 2004). To follow is more on the socio-cultural context of rural life as it impacts rural women's well-being.

Rural culture is grounded in strength and resilience. Traditional gender roles and high social visibility can impact women's well-being. Service providers can be seen as outsiders, which can impact women's decisions to visit health care professionals (Leipert & George, 2008). In addition, rural women often feel unworthy of their ailments and health concerns, particularly if they maintain traditional "stay-at-home" roles. In part, this is attributed to the belief that the ailments resulting from the traditional physical labour engaged in by male "breadwinning" partners are earned and deserving of medical attention (Leipert & Reutter, 2005). Women in northern BC tend to live longer with their diseases and not seek out or have access to the care they need (Leipert & Reutter, 2005). A culture that encourages traditional gender roles also impacts women's health in terms of familial violence. A study on rural farming communities in northern Ontario found that "women might be encouraged to stay in abusive and unhealthy relationships to prevent division of marital assets and to keep the farm intact" (Leipert & George, 2008, p. 212). Women may also be less inclined to access certain services for fear of stigmatization. The dense social relationships and high visibility of rural life make access of social and health services daunting for many women. The stigmatizing of women-centred services as destructive to traditional family forms as well as their chronic under-funding further impact women's health and wellness (Leipert & Reutter, 2005). Women in rural communities draw on an accessible, personal and family network in times of need. Yet, the specific type of need required by the women may dictate the sufficiency of support received by the women. To follow is a review of LDC employment and the implications of this context.

LDC Employment

The hinterlands of Canada have a long history of natural resource extraction. LDC employment has been a growing resource sector labour force organization norm since the 1950s. It replaced a former company town model in which towns, where workers and their families would live, were developed close to resource extraction projects (Markey, Ryser, & Halseth, 2015; McGillvray, 2005; Storey & Shrimpton, 1989). Since the early 1980s, in northern BC there has been a shift towards use of a flexible, mobile labour force to engage at work at remote, often inaccessible, locations (Markey, et al., 2015). Labour camps are used by industry for both temporary and longer-term resource extraction projects in exploration, construction, and operational stages of resource development (House of Representatives, 2013 as cited in CDI, 2015). Long-distance labour commuting camps are used in situations where the work project is temporary, there is no road access to the work site, and/or local infrastructure cannot accommodate housing the labourers (CDI, 2015). Considering the often remote, inaccessible nature of work camps, workers are required to maintain extended periods of time away from their home communities and families. Typically, LDC workers have been men. Studies show that women, in domestic partnerships with these men, who remain in community have experienced adjustment processes, psychosocial stress, role change, and positive adaptation. To follow is more on the LDC context.

Historical Context of LDC Employment in Canada

LDC employment had its beginnings "in the 1950s in the offshore oil industry in the Gulf of Mexico, where the distance of the work from the shore made commuting impractical" (Gramling, 1995 as cited in Storey, 2010, p. 1162). In the 1970s, LDC employment was increasingly used in both Canada and Australia with the "expansion of mining activity into

increasingly remote areas at a time when corporate interests were focusing on 'lean' and 'flexible' modes of production and when governments were unwilling to support the development of new single-industry communities in remote areas" (Storey, 2009 as cited in Storey, 2010, p. 1162). The ongoing expansion of the mining, oil, and gas sectors; remoteness of the worksite; affordability; and a flexible workforce, continue to push demand for this workforce arrangement (Storey, 2010). Furthermore, camp labourer "mobility is a direct response to community economic decline and/or opportunity that is, in essence placeless" (Markey et al., 2015, p. 132). LDC employment and remote labour camps have been the "standard model for new mining, petroleum and many other types of resource development in remote areas [o]ver the past twenty-five years, and in Canada and Australia in particular" (Storey, 2010, p. 1161). The LDC form of labour organization will continue into the foreseeable future (Storey, 2010). LDC employment will also continue to be used as a form of labour organization in northern BC.

Context of LDC Employment in Northern BC

LDC employment is a workforce arrangement in heavy use by the resource sector in northern BC, primarily in the mining and oil and gas sectors (Hoath & Haslam McKenzie, 2013). Historically, the forest and mining industries have been the main economic drivers of northern BC. In the 1950s and 1960s, there was significant emphasis on the development of the natural resource extraction industries in the province (Markey, Halseth, & Manson, 2012). Global economic restructuring and accompanying resource industry change characterized the 1980s in the region (Markey et al., 2012). In 2008, a significant economic decline impacted certain forestry based communities in the region, which saw further mill closures in regional communities (Ryser et al., 2016). This marked a shift towards previous industry commitment to place-based, community focused economic development characterized by company towns

towards a fluid, mobile labour and capital (Ryser et al., 2016). Industry shifted focus from a former social contract to provide relative stability and growth via company towns to require mobile, flexible labour via labour camps. A residential and non-residential workforce commutes to work sites by fly-in/fly-out, drive-in/drive-out, or bus-in/bus-out transportation. In BC, this form of workforce organization has developed alongside and also replaced the previous model of company or instant towns (McGillvray, 2005). Examples of instant towns in the region include Tumbler Ridge and Kitimat, BC, which were developed as permanent communities to house workers and their families for the resource extraction sector (Storey, 2010). LDC communities are characterized as either host or source communities. Host communities are closer to extraction projects while source communities strictly provide the labour for the projects. Communities in northwestern BC, such as Smithers and Terrace, have functioned as both host and source communities; they provide labour and also host a transient work force for industrial projects. However, Storey (2010) also indicated that industrial camps are utilized "in or adjacent to established communities to accommodate project labour, suggesting that it is not 'remoteness' that is necessarily the principal driver in decisions regarding the use of this approach" (p. 1162), for example, Fort St. John and Kitimat, BC. LDC workers in northern BC are engaged in work at remote sites where workers are required to leave their homes and families for set, extended periods of time. Industrial camps "can be quickly set up and taken down for exploration work, or [are] semi-permanently located for longer term construction or extraction work" (Peace River Regional District, 2013, p. 17). Accommodations include anything from tents, RVs, simple wooden structures, to more permanent buildings and trailers. Industrial camps are used as a cost effective way of obtaining a highly mobile and transient workforce (NHA, 2012a).

In 2012, there were approximately 1,809 industrial camps in northern BC: 1,567 oil and

gas camps, 108 forestry logging camps, 44 camps or work camps with water licenses, and 98 major projects identified, which may use or require camps (NHA, 2012a). This figure included some camps that were not currently active or are awaiting development. In the northeast of the province, oil and gas camps are predominant; forestry camps and some mining camps are located in the northern interior; and mining and forestry camps are the predominant industry camps in the northwest region (NHA, 2012a). The highest number of industrial camps and the greatest number of LDC employees are situated in the northeastern region of the province (NHA, 2012a). In 2012, there were 98 current or proposed major industrial projects, 11 operating mines, and 27 proposed new projects which may, or may not, require additional industrial camps and thus LDC workers (NHA, 2012a).

LDC Employment Lifestyle –Men, Women, Families, and Communities

To understand the LDC context requires consideration of the varied domains of experience in this context, including: employer demands and requirements, assessment of psychosocial well-being, role change, family cohesion, health concerns, adjustment and perception of adjustment within the family, economic benefits, care-giving stress, and others. These domains of experience are interconnected. The following review of the context of life for men, women, domestic partners, children, and communities is grounded in the context of the research subject: heterosexual couples with the man working in camp while the female partner remains at home with the young children. It also considers the interconnectedness of the women, men, children and family life, and community.

Male workers. Work in industrial camps provides both challenges and opportunities. Research shows that LDC labourers continue to predominantly be male. Review of current literature relating to male workers' experiences in camp provide important insight into this

context. A recent document published by the NHA (2012a) entitled *Understanding the State of Industrial Camps in Northern BC: A Background Paper* highlights important findings regarding LDC workers' experiences in industrial camps in the region. The study found challenges associated with labour camps, including impacts of industrial camp atmosphere, health and shift work, and mental health and problematic substance use (NHA, 2012a). While other studies described the context of LDC for male workers, such as stages of adaptation workers experienced in LDC employment as well as details on both positive and negative aspects to LDC employment for male workers (Barton, 2002; Collinson, 1998; Gent, 2004; Goldenberg et al., 2008; Ryser et al., 2016; Sibbel, 2010; Storey, 2010; Storey and Shrimpton, 1989; Watts, 2004; Whalen, 2013).

Life in camp includes long hours of work without a day off until furlough. Camps are predominantly comprised of male workers and research suggests these work sites typically hold a culture of "hyper-masculinity, sexism, [and] apathy towards self-care" (Goldenberg et al., 2008, p. 352). A study on LDC households in McKenzie, BC indicated that approximately 85% of :LDC labourers in that study were male (Ryser et al., 2016). Camps vary in their offering of after shift-activities with more established camps providing exercise equipment, televisions, and games rooms, for example. Camps lacking activities can result in workers feeling bored, lonely, and isolated as though they are living in a "prison-like" setting (Collinson, 1998). Despite industry efforts to maintain dry camps, there are ongoing concerns with drinking and drug use in some camps. Upon leaving camp, in situations where drinking in camp became a problem, workers and their families were also faced with his increased drinking while on furlough (Sibbel, 2010). Shift work has also been shown to contribute to sleep disorders (Collinson, 1998); illness and emotional distress (Barton, 2002); depression related to having too much free time to think

(Collinson, 1998); binge drinking/partying on furlough (Barton, 2002); and anxiety and stress related to work safety (Goldenberg et al., 2008). In the northern BC context, workers' concerns with LDC centred on "transportation logistics, financial impacts, and safety" (Ryser et al., 2016, p. 594). Positive aspects and benefits to living and working in camp include increased pay, meeting likeminded friends and coworkers, not having to cook or clean, and gaining access to new, exciting life experiences (Sibbel, 2010). Ryser et al. (2016) found that LDC labourers from McKenzie identified employment benefits such as "financial support, employment benefits, education and training, and work experience in other sectors" (p.594).

Watts' (2006) study on the impacts of LDC employment in Australia found that men typically went through four stages of adaptation to the employment context. They experienced a changing concept of self-identity (1-2 months), changing emotions (3-4 months), changing relationships (4-6 months), and acceptance or rejection of lifestyle (as cited in Sibbel, 2010). A changing self-identity included feelings of isolation and adjustment to being in a new environment (culture, geographical), dissociation from one's normal life schedule, and feeling as though one is living in two separate worlds (Watts, 2004). Some workers quickly became fully integrated into work culture and had trouble "shutting it off" upon their return home resulting in constant talk about work and a focus on completing household projects (Watts, 2004).

Previously unemployed men enjoy the increased self-worth that accompanied their high paid employment (Watts, 2004). Workers with the capacity to adapt to LDC demands "can enjoy job satisfaction, whereas those who cannot generally self-select out of the industry" (Gent, 2004, p. 37). The opportunities for LDC workers to receive recognition for new work, promotion, and increased chances to use their skills and abilities, contributed to their success in camp work (Gent, 2004). Changing emotions gave opportunity to the workers to adjust to being away from

their families and to integrate into a new culture and context. A benefit of being separated from one's partner "gave both parties space to develop personal interests and time for their own pursuits, which might not have existed before" (Watts, 2004, p. 63). Men experienced loneliness, isolation, stress with ongoing role change, familial relationship strain, and psychosocial strain (Arnold, 1995). For some workers, long-term psychosocial strain led to depression (Watts, 2004). Feelings of sadness, loss, grief, and anger were also experienced by workers for missing important events back home. Changing relationships included role reversal, marital strain, strengthened relationships, continuation (or not) of domestic relationships, and attachment to the financial benefits (Whalen, 2013). Role adjustment also took place with women taking on roles formerly held by the husband (Whalen, 2013). For some men, women's empowerment was considered positively while for others not. Watts (2004), noted that when women took "over traditional male roles whilst the male was absent, [this] appeared to cause some resentment and the potential for relationship disharmony or conflict" (p. 63). Men and their families also struggled with relationship strain and familial stress (Storey & Shrimpton, 1989). The exhaustion from commuting, loneliness, sporadic time together, and missing out on the day-to-day interactions contributed to this strain (Watts, 2004). Communication was vital in order for couples to succeed and it contributed to a strengthened relationship (Sibbel, 2010). At this stage in the adaptation process, workers discussed the concept of the "golden handcuff syndrome". As the moniker suggests, they felt locked in to the high wages associated with LDC employment (Watts, 2004). At the final stage, workers and their families reached a point of acceptance or rejection of the life style. This resulted in accepting and enjoying it; striving to balance the positive and negative aspects; making the best of it by accepting it, but passively rejecting it; or setting a goal for eventual discontinuation (Watts, 2004).

Overall negative experiences for the men included "long working hours, extended periods away from family and friends, difficulties forming and maintaining relationships, negotiating roles within the family, interruptions from site during the break and difficult working conditions" (Sibbel, 2010, p. 53). Further challenges to male workers included "poor communication, loneliness and isolation, abandonment of responsibilities, grief and loss, depression, possible substance abuse, personal devaluing of family unit, [and] guilt at leaving family unit (Watts, 2004, p. 72). While positive experiences associated with the LDC employment include: personal growth, independence, and freedom; strengthening skills, enhanced quality family time during furlough; career advancement; financial reward; relationship development with co-workers, strengthened relationships, and coping skills (Sibbel, 2010; Watts, 2004). Moving forward, LDC workers in northern BC have indicated a need for more attention to

> develop flexible shift schedules; to support workers' ongoing capacity and skill development; to invest in communication, conflict resolution; and problem-solving skills for workers; to invest in fatigue management training; to broaden the infrastructure and opportunities for interaction to connect workers with support networks; and to ensure information about local and non-local supports is current and available in multiple formats (Ryser et al., 2016, p. 594).

LDC employment also has real impacts for women who remain in community while their partner works in camp.

Women. For the stay-at-home female partners in an LDC lifestyle, adaptation, psychosocial impacts, and coping are important aspects of their experience. In Whalen's (2013) study of women in LDC domestic partnerships in rural Newfoundland, she found their prominent challenges related to "adjusting to life without their partner, being responsible for higher

workloads, and the emotional toll…experienced as a result of extended partner absences" (Whalen, 2013, p. 43). In McKenzie, BC women indicated that the LDC lifestyle required them to restructure household responsibilities as well as have more responsibility for child care and household duties (Markey et al., 2015). The psychosocial effects of frequent departures/returns of a working partner resulted in anxiety for the women. Yet as women became more accustomed to the lifestyle this decreases (Hubinger, Parker, & Clavarino, 2002; Taylor, Morrice, Clark, & McCann, 1985; Whalen, 2013). In the lifestyle adaptation process, women often fulfilled the "major responsibility for normalising a family's physical, social and emotional behaviour" (Hubinger et al., 2002, p. 83). Women noted challenges such as their partner's absence during holidays and/or important events, feeling like a "third wheel" when spending time with other couples, increased household management and childcare workload (Whalen, 2013). Women also indicated that "[l]oneliness was only identified as an issue for those without children. Furthermore, women who had adult children reported the most satisfaction with the lifestyle" (Reynolds, 2004 as cited in Sibbel, 2010, p. 56). Communication was vital to the women and the families in order to maintain relationships (Whalen, 2013). Women's length of time in an LDC lifestyle impacted their experience of it. Those women who had been in the lifestyle longer held differing perceptions of it than those who were relatively new in LDC (Whalen 2013).

In a phenomenological study of female partners of Australian off-shore oil and gas workers, Reynolds (2004) found the majority of the women valued the quality time they had with their partners when they were home, the opportunities for independence and maintenance of their own identity when their partner was away, and the financial rewards offered by the lifestyle. Furthermore women "valued the increasing independence and sense of self-reliance often resulting from the FIFO [(fly-in/fly-out)] lifestyle" (Sibbel, 2010, p. 170). Women also stated

the daily phone calls with their husbands while they were offshore helped communication within their relationships" (Reynolds, 2004 as cited in Sibbel, 2010, p. 55).

In terms of coping with challenges and stress associated with the lifestyle, women engaged in positive self-talk, focused on the benefits of LDC employment, had regular communication with their partner, and engaged in time management, such as, counting down to a partner's return and keeping occupied during his time away (Whalen, 2013). Importantly, women were responsible for developing their own support networks and self-care regime to survive in the lifestyle (Whalen, 2013). Women relied on family members, primarily but also friends and neighbours for help with child-minding, household tasks, and emotional support while their partners were away at work (Whalen, 2013). Adding to this, Hubinger et al., (2002) found that "[f]amily, rather than friends, appeared to be the most important source of social support for a number of women" (p. 89). Women also indicated there were not any formal support services targeting their specific needs (Whalen, 2013). In addition, when rural communities were geographically distant from one another it could be unsustainable to access some informal supports (Whalen, 2013). The LDC life also variously impacts domestic partnerships.

Domestic partnerships. Domestic partnerships in an LDC lifestyle are characterized by adaptation, challenges, opportunities, and growth. Varied relationship issues can arise from this employment context, in particular as couples newly start the lifestyle. Adaptation challenges include a transition by both worker and partner between two different lives, difficulties in couple and family communication, unmet expectations by both partners following reunions, the burden of unequally shared family responsibilities when the partner is at home, role conflict as women gain greater independence and personal confidence, and ambivalence partners feel toward the

lifestyle (Taylor & Simmons, 2009, p. 25). Time away from their spouses as a result of LDC has impacted spousal relationships, which at times resulted in break ups (Markey et al., 2015). In addition, couples have described relationship stress resultant from reduced opportunities for physical and emotional intimacy (Sibbel, 2010). While some couples felt that the furlough time was insufficient to "properly reconnect emotionally with their partner when they were together" (Sibbel, 2010, p. 160). Concerns of fidelity have also been raised by both individuals in the partnership. Yet opportunities and benefits also exist in LDC.

Couples have indicated concentrated time spent together during furlough periods, expanded roles for men and women, increased financial security, and personal growth and coping skills (Sibbel, 2010; Watts, 2004; Whalen, 2013). The increased family income gained through LDC employment surpassed the stress and challenges associated with it (Storey & Shrimpton, 1989; Whalen, 2013). In thinking about their future with LDC employment, women stated that although LDC is not ideal for their families they saw no other choice due to limited local employment (Whalen, 2013). In terms of workload alleviation, women reported that their domestic partners would contribute greatly to household duties and child care during their furlough periods despite this work's characterization as traditionally women's work (Whalen, 2013). In contrast, a couple of respondents stated their "partners will help out with household duties to a certain extent,…[although] the bulk of household duties still fell on their shoulders… they did not feel as if the housework was unequally shared (as he will contribute in other ways)" (Whalen, 2013, p. 48). Women also described experiencing an adaptation process to their partners' work furlough schedule.

Adaptation to a partner's return or departure presents challenges and growth for couples. LDC families have stated that a "transition from being a one parent household to a two parent

household may involve adjustments…[and] negotiation of household labour division" (Gallegos, 2006, p. 66). For some women, a partner's return from camp required adjusting their schedule and routine from the different life they led when their partner was away as "they were happy to rearrange their own schedules when their partner was home in order to maximize their time together; this was true for the commuting partner as well" (Whalen, 2013, p. 76). The LDC workers were often challenged with reintegration into their families upon their return home from a rotation in camp (Whalen, 2013). LDC workers have also cited stress related to an insufficient time out of camp to manage domestic issues as a concern (Shandro, Veiga, Shoveller, Scoble, & Koehoorn, 2011). This has been negotiated by the couple through a "collaborative, team approach with each partner contributing to the successful transition from away to home" (Gallegos, 2006, p. 66).

Communication is significant to support a sense of connectedness, partnership, and family satisfaction in LDC. LDC workers with access to communication infrastructure, such as the internet or telephones, while in camp experienced decreased feelings of isolation from their families (Sibbel, 2010). Taylor and Simmons (2009) indicated "strategies and related behavioral patterns (rules, routines) may become problematic over time if they are not …[amendable] to changes in circumstances (for example, birth of baby, partner starting or ceasing work, or children growing up and sharing in household tasks)" (p. 24). With experience over time couples find strategies to negotiate roles and decision making, but until these strategies are developed the couple will face stress in their relationship and family system (Gallegos, 2006; Taylor & Simmonds, 2009). In sum, the decision to maintain an LDC lifestyle is dependent upon the needs of the couple and family. In particular, some families have considered ending the LDC lifestyle "once the partner currently at home had finished studies, had gained employment, or the

children had gone to school enabling a wider range of employment of options for the partner at home" (Gallegos, 2006, p. 20). For others the lifestyle provides enough benefits to warrant accepting the challenges. Note the impact of this context on family life and in particular the children.

Family – the children. In terms of family life, the LDC lifestyle impacts both the children and their parents. In particular, children can demonstrate both behavioural problems and tension with the stay-at-home parent (Riggs, 1990 as cited in Hubinger, Parker, & Clavarino, 2002). The LDC lifestyle shapes couples' decisions to have children (or not) (Gallegos, 2006; Taylor & Simmonds, 2009; Whalen, 2013). The response of children to LDC can inform couples' decisions to remain, or not, in LDC employment (Gallegos, 2006). Some families are not able to cope with the LDC lifestyle leading to decreased family functioning and disintegration of relationships (Carrington & Pereira, 2011). Conversely other families are able to thrive in the LDC context.

The age of children in the family has an important mediating relationship to the children's, as well as mothers', experiences in the LDC employment lifestyle. Gallegos (2006) indicated that most families are not concerned with the children's responses to the lifestyle, especially if they are under the age of four. However, there were also families with children under the age of one who stated the children "could become a little clingy when the worker departed and it took some time for the child to feel comfortable again upon their return" (Gallegos, 2006, p. 35). Older children could "go through periods of sadness, anger, or naughtiness" (Gallegos, 2006, p. 35). Themes relating to children's experiences in LDC lifestyle point to children being too young to recognize their father is away; initial resistance and associated behaviours with their father's departure, which varied in duration and presentation

according to age; going through an adaptation period; role adjustment; and concerns regarding healthy childhood development.

Children also experience loneliness and sadness while their father is on a work rotation. Some children also experience challenges in becoming re-accustomed to the father's presence on his return home. Children's levels of "stress and tension appear to heighten particularly in the first seven to10 days during the transition between home and sea and vice versa" (Hubinger et al., 2002, p. 83). With the onset of the LDC lifestyle, children often experience an adjustment period. Beach (1999) found that "families with preschool and primary school-aged children reported the most difficulties adapting to this lifestyle" (as cited in Sibbel, 2010, p. 59). Whalen (2013) noted that young children went through emotional and behavioural adjustments with the return and departure of their father. Some very young children are challenged to remember their father after an extended absence. For many families with children under the age of six, concerns over health social and cognitive development are pertinent. Parents recognize that "care in the early years has significant implications for how people develop and learn as well as their ability to cope with stress and regulate their own emotions" (Gallegos, 2006, p.3). Whalen (2013) stated that all women indicated their children "went through an adjustment period when their father first began commuting, with the exception of young infants who were unaware of any other lifestyle and who grew up accustomed to their father being away for extended periods of time" (p. 51). Yet participants who had young children in that study "reported that their kids experienced no long lasting or serious ill effects from LDC. They asserted that their children were very well adjusted and responsible individuals; perhaps even because of their family's particular lifestyle, no in spite of it" (Whalen, 2013, p. 75) . Mothers of young children in LDC have unique experiences to those with older children.

Studies indicate that women with young children, preschool-aged and babies, experienced more significant loneliness and workload (Pini & Mayes, 2012) compared to those with school aged children. In Sibbel's (2010) research a respondent stated LDC was challenging when her children were very young, such as babies. She had the sense that she was fully responsible for an emergency as there was no one else to rely on for support. The birth of the second child can also be difficult, particularly for the at-home parent. Concern with having sufficient parenting skills was not so much of a concern for the stay-at-home parent as much as managing alone with two children close in age without sufficient available family or social support (Sibbel, 2010). In conjunction with higher workload, mothers with young children were not as readily able to engage in paid employment. However, it is important to note Kaczmaek and Sibbel (2008) found that overall mothers in the LDC lifestyle did not believe their families to be greatly distressed by it. Older children, and their mothers, are reported to have differing experiences.

Hoath and Halsam McKenze (2013) found that older children responded to the stress associated with their fathers' departure with behavioral outbursts (Hoath & Halsam McKenzie, 2013). Women with teenaged children have (Reynolds, 2004 as cited in Sibbel, 2010, p. 56). Concerns in LDC for older children relate to children's truancy at school; challenges with shifting between single and dual parenting styles; and "overly controlling, indulgent, or disengaged parenting by the [LDC] parent" (Hoath & Halsam McKenzie, 2013, p. 47); and some behavioural concerns specific to male children in the absence of their father (Hoath & Halsam McKenzie, 2013). In a study regarding LDC employment in Mackenzie, BC, researchers found some youth presented with increased anxiety and behavioural concerns as a result of limited access to their commuting parent or other community role models (Ryser et al., 2011). The

psychosocial impact of LDC employment on primary school-aged children related to "employment-related absence appears to have minimal impact on children's well-being as children's depressive symptomatology, anxiety and perception of family functioning fell within the range of healthy functioning" (Kaczmerek & Sibbel, 2008, p. 307). In comparison with a community sample, mothers with primary school-aged children had greater challenges with communicating their emotions relating to care giving and household management (Kaczmerek & Sibbel, 2008). With increased household and childcare responsibilities resultant from an LDC spouse's absence, women remaining in the community carry a greater burden.

In rural communities in particular, child care and the woman's workload are an ongoing concern for families (Whalen, 2013). This concern is particularly acute for LDC mothers. Families have utilized formal childcare for varied reasons: to provide a breathing space for the partner at home, to help facilitate a

> 'chill-out' zone when the worker returned, and to help manage the family and paid employment options. For the partners at home, child care provided not only an opportunity for their children to socialise with others but also gave them time to catch up on housework, payment of bills and other tasks that contribute to the machinery of the household (Gallegos, 2006, p. 63).

Women in the LDC lifestyle have indicated frustration with the "cost, support, availability and the role of the company in contributing to child care" (Gallegos, 2006, p.99). Other important sources of child care support are family, friends, and mothers' and play groups, or other child-centred activities and programs (Gallegos, 2006). Organized activities with other mothers also serve an important purpose of providing social interaction for the stay at home parent. However, women in Gallegos' (2006) study also shared that they experienced difficulty locating

dependable, trustworthy support on short notice. Furthermore, they were hesitant to ask friends or family for support knowing there may be an expectation of reciprocity they may not be able to fulfill (Gallegos, 2006). Child care along with access to a spectrum of services, such as: doctors, health and social service supports, parenting help lines, community organizations, nurses, and cleaners, for example, are also important to the practical, emotional, and psychosocial wellbeing of stay-at-home mothers and the children, are highly valued by camp wives (Gallegos, 2006).

Adaptability and resilience are imperative to family success in this lifestyle. Protective factors can function as a buffer for children in the LDC lifestyle, such as: positive social and familial environments, peer and parent support, family cohesion, and an increased family income (Silburn et al., 1996 as cited in Kaczmarek & Sibbel, 2008). It is likely that adaptive capacity and skills "evolve[e] for the at-home parent…These mechanisms serve to maintain equilibrium and stability in the family system so that the family members (including the children) can perform tasks associated with everyday living" (Kaczmarek & Sibbel, 2008, p.308). Families who can modify and balance their cohesion, flexibility, and practice healthy communication are more successful at maintaining this lifestyle (Taylor & Simmonds, 2009). In particular, healthy families who adjust their rules, roles, and routine to accommodate for change experience greater stability (Taylor & Simmonds, 2009). Adding to success with LDC is the children's access to the father for "more extensive periods of recreation time, thus a greater amount of time (and quality of time) that can be spent with family than in 'normal' family situations" (Houghton, 1993 as cited in Hubinger, Parker, & Clavarino, 2002, p. 82). When thinking about their future with LDC employment, women have indicated that LDC "was not an ideal lifestyle for them or their families…but due to the lack of employment opportunities at home" (Whalen, 2013, p. 61) it was a necessary choice. As indicated above, it is easy to recognize that positive family

functioning, inclusive of healthy social and emotional development of the children, requires successful management of the LDC lifestyle (Gallegos, 2006). The impact of LDC employment extends to the community context.

Communities. Communities also experience challenges and benefits to LDC activity. With an existing deficit in sufficient social services (NHA, 2012a), rural source communities are overburdened by the demand on the local infrastructure to accommodate the increased population (Peace River Regional District, 2013a). Source and host communities face varied levels of strain on their local services and resources. Such demands are the result of on-the-job injuries; substance misuse, unsafe sex practices and resultant unwanted pregnancies and/or venereal diseases; mental health strain while at work; increases in criminal activity and the sex trade; gambling; increased intimate partner violence; and familial relationship stressors increase demand for health, mental health, and social services (NHA, 2012b; Storey, 2010). Communities also faced decreased civic engagement. In Mackenzie, BC, LDC workers stated that upon their return to home they were too busy catching up on household duties and spending time with family to participate in civic engagement, such as: volunteer firefighting, ambulance services, community sports team participation and coaching, for example (Ryser, Rajput, Halseth, & Markey, 2012). Community organizations have faced volunteer burnout resulting from limited available volunteers (Markey et al., 2015). With increased LDC employment in northern BC communities, women have "started to play an even greater role in community organizations, having previously been inactive, so their children would continue to have activities. For example, while men traditionally coached hockey and other sports teams, women now fulfilled these roles" (Markey et al., 2015, p. 144). However, community organizations have played an important role "to increase opportunities and support for social interaction, particularly for

spouses and family members who remained in the community" (Markey et al., 2015, p. 142). Benefits included the increased economic activity from workers incomes and demand for local goods and services. Additionally, the Peace River Regional District (2013) established a fair share agreement, an industrial development tax sharing program between the province and Peace River municipalities to contribute funds for municipal services.

The life world of working class women in rural, northern BC considers intersecting aspects of their lives and identity, such as gender identity construction, working class identity, northern BC culture and social processes, and well-being and access to services. In this milieu, women's experiences are shaped by geography and place-based aspects of community. A review of the varied aspects of the women's lives takes into account their private/individual and family lives, kinship and other social relationships; caregiving; dense social relationships; and northern BC cultural norms of self-reliance, mutuality, and connectedness to community. Building on this, the region has historical been shaped by LDC employment, which shapes the circumstances of workers, the workers' partners, children, and the communities. LDC employment has become a resource extraction labour organization norm in Canada since the 1970s. It provides a mobile workforce for remote resource extraction. Studies on the experiences of women in this context have indicated role adjustment for the stay-at-home partner; transitionary experiences for the returning male partner; increased workload, especially for women with young children; the importance of family, kinship, and neighbours for support to the stay-in community women. Women who remained at home often experienced loneliness. These studies point to the importance of further study on the experiences of women in the lifestyle, in particular women with young children. To follow is a description of the research design and process I followed to meet this end. Subsequently, the research findings and their discussion are provided for review.

Chapter Three: Research Design

In this research, I explored the lived experiences of northwestern B.C. camp wives, with children less than five years of age, whose domestic partners work at minimum two weeks away in a labour camp while they remain at home. It sought to uncover how these women perceive, interpret, and make meaning of their personal and social worlds as individuals in the LDC employment lifestyle. The use of a qualitative research approach via the interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) was used to meet this end. The research was shaped by feminist, critical, and ecological systems theoretical perspectives. To follow is a discussion on the methodology, method, sample and recruitment process, data collection, data analysis, and ethical considerations.

Methodology

Articulation of the research methodology considers the appropriateness of qualitative inquiry to the research question. It also provides the rationale for IPA based on its epistemological underpinnings and the theoretical perspectives as they align with the intentions of the research (Mayan, 2009). In qualitative inquiry, theoretical perspective(s) often provide for "an overall orientating lens of questions of gender, class and race...This lens...shapes the types of questions asked, informs how data are collected and analyzed...what issues are important to examine...and the people that need to be studied" (Creswell, 2009, p. 62). The theoretical perspective indicates which aspects of the women's lives relating to the LDC employment lifestyle phenomenon were, and were not, attended to in this study. Furthermore, the theoretical perspective(s) of a study indicate the researcher's position in and understanding of the context of the research topic and how the final discussion and analysis will unfold in the results (Creswell, 2009).

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is theoretically rooted in phenomenology, which seeks to build a philosophical science of consciousness, theory of interpretation, and symbolic interactionism (Marriot & Thompson, 2008). Furthermore, IPA posits that "the meanings an individual ascribes to events are of central concern but are only accessed through an interpretative process" (Marriot & Thompson, 2008, p. 246). Through an inductive process, IPA centres its attention on a population's experiences, understanding of a particular phenomenon, and their interpretation and ascription of meaning to the phenomenon (Smith, Flowers, and Larkin, 2009). This research strove to understand participants' understandings of their experiences from their perspective while avoiding over-generalization of their situation, much in line with the inductive (bottom-up vis-à-vis hypothesis testing) intentions of IPA.

A positivist, quantitative methodology uses a deductive approach that captures numerical data to test or verify a theory and seeks to generalize findings (Creswell, 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2015; Tracy, 2013). A quantitative approach to the study of a phenomenon asserts that for "lived experience to be considered a science, commonalities in the experience of the participants must be identified, so that a generalised description is possible" (Lopez & Willis, 2004, p. 728). Such an approach to my research would not have allowed for the rich, nuanced description of the women in the study nor fully take into account their context. A qualitative research paradigm strives to advance "an understanding of the meaning and experience dimensions of humans' lives and social worlds. Central to good qualitative research is whether the research participants' subjective meanings, actions and social contexts, as understood by them, are illuminated" (Fossey, Harvey, McDermott, & Davidson, 2002, p. 717). A qualitative approach is most appropriate in order to provide a thick description of the women's experiences through the use of

IPA, which is further discussed below.

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) allows interpretive analysis to "be informed by direct engagement with existing theoretical constructs" (Larkin, Watts, & Clifton, 2006, p. 104). An IPA approach provides that "humans are embedded in their world to such an extent that subjective experiences are inextricably linked with social, cultural, and political contexts" (Lopez & Willis, 2004, p. 729). Moving from the descriptive aspect of IPA to an interpretative account of a participant's meaning making in terms of the text they have produced. In this process, the analysis can pull from outside knowledge sources (Houston & Mullan-Jensen, 2011). Engagement in theoretical constructs provides an opportunity to expand an understanding of the participants' experiences. It moves from a reductionist focus in order to look

> closely at the interrelationship between agency and structure, the micro and the macro and the subjective and the objective dimensions of social life. Second, the role of power in shaping meaning is poorly conceived. Traditionally, [this]...stance has centred on meanings constructed in the context of the cultural sphere. This emphasis gives insufficient weight to the role of political economy and how it imposes constraints on the subject (Houston & Mullan-Jensen, 2011, p. 3).

Feminist, critical, and ecological systems theories guided the research. The choice to use these theoretical perspectives was informed by existing scholarship and my own experiences with the topic. Feminist and critical thought shape my understanding of the women's context and the particular aspects of the phenomenon studied in this research. From the broadest perspective, feminism as a theoretical approach provides that patriarchy (male dominance) exists and reduces

the value, roles, and opportunities of women (Tracy, 2013). As an intellectual and political movement it strives for change (equity) and freedom from marginalization and its accompanying "oppressive situations in society, organizations, families, [and]/or relationships" (Tracy, 2013, p. 55). Feminism allowed for both feminist thought and analysis in this study, which increased its breadth and depth "by recalling and insisting on the importance of the lived context, and the multiple aspects, particularities, and dynamics of the social and cultural world, of social and political being in that world" (Fisher, 2010, p. 94). From a wider perspective, critical theory suggests there is an ongoing oppositional process of control and resistance in cultural life. Furthermore, knowledge is created and disseminated and historical and hierarchical power relations transpire via everyday interaction (Tracy, 2013). Critical thought has supported understanding of the employment context of the working class in northern rural BC. As discussed previously in this document, rural, resource rich regions in Canada exist at the political and economic decision-making periphery in relation to urban centres in the southern and eastern regions of the country (Collier, 2006).

From the standpoints of feminist and critical thought, it was my intent to shed light on the historical and ongoing experiences of working class women in rural, northwestern B.C. Thus, in line with the objectives set out for this study, working class women were the purposively sampled population. The research aimed to bring to the fore the under -acknowledged and -studied context of life for northern BC women and provide an opportunity for the women to articulate and explore their unique personal experiences within this employment context and lifestyle. It also intended to describe the divergent and intersectional experiences of the women. These perspectives describe the context of women's lives as influenced by patriarchy and subordinate and peripheral social, economic, and political roles for women; and oppressive

power relationships between government, industry, and isolated rural Canadian communities (Alston & Kent, 2008; Campbell, Bell, & Finney, 2006; Leiptert & George, 2008; Leipert & Reutter, 2005; Payne, 2005; Peters et al., 2010; Reed, 2003a; Reed. 2003b; Reed, 2005).

Systems theory is a core philosophical tenet of social work practice. It is a ubiquitous person-in-environment approach to practice in the profession that indicates those we work with are inextricably linked to the systems around them. Ecological systems theory guided the investigation to support uncovering the women's mean-making within the LDC phenomenon in the varied systems of their lives. The ecological systems model (Bronfenbrenner, 1997, 1986) can allow for analysis of the women's life worlds' as they interact in and are influenced by interrelated and permeable, multiple systems: the individual participants, micro (the immediate environment: families, friends, workplace, volunteer centre), mezzo (interactions between the micro systems), exo (wider social settings: work place, school, social organizations, communities), and macro (culture, society, governance) systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1986; Sibbel, 2010). Therefore, their life worlds are embedded and interact at the interface of history, personal values, worldview, family, "home and work environments, their social and cultural settings, their life course stage, as well as society's broader political and historical contexts" (Sibbel, 2010, p. 32). Ecological systems theory provides that "each system is influenced by the status and nature of the other systems of which it is part, and as such is fluid and transactional" (Sibbel, 2010, p. 32). This research aimed to develop an understanding of the women's meaning-making within their "patterns of activities, roles and interpersonal relationships experienced in networks of face-to-face relationships" (Voydanoff, 2005, p. 822) within the context of the varied systems they engage with. In this consideration, the interview schedule was developed to explore women's experiences across systems relating to their individual, camp wife, social roles,

children, and community life domains. To follow is discussion on the method, sample, data collection and analysis, validation of findings, and ethical considerations.

Method

This study was grounded in the work of Smith (2004), Smith et al., (2009), Smith, Jarman, and Osborn, (1999), Smith and Osborn (2008), Smith (2011) and Smith and Osborn (2015) who developed the IPA analysis approach. IPA was utilized to gain insight into the subjective life world of the women. It is an appropriate approach to gain a nuanced understanding of the personal meaning and the women's lived experiences. It is a dynamic process in which the researcher actively steps into the life world of the participants, attempting to interpret their experiences and make meaning of how they perceive it (Piertkiewicz & Smith, 2012). To follow is an elaboration on the population sample and recruitment, data collection, and data analysis and interpretation processes.

Participants. In congruence with an IPA approach, a relatively homogenous population to whom the research question is relevant was recruited for the research (Smith & Osborn, 2008). A homogenous participant sample has common characteristics and experiences in relation to the study phenomenon (Smith & Osborn, 2003). Purposive sampling was used to articulate and identify participants for the study, which involved setting criteria for specific participants who would produce data that met "the parameters of the project's research questions, goals, and purposes" (Tracy, 2013, p. 134). The sample selection criteria required participants to be heterosexual working class women in a domestic relationship with a man who works at minimum two week rotations in camp. The women identified as working class via their own cultural grounding and/or the profession of their male partners. The participant age limit required the women were at minimum 20 years of age with no upper age limit. Participants ranged in age

from 25-38 years old. The women also had to have children less than five years of age. The age of the women's children was significant and intentional in this study as it impacted their experiences. The specific life experiences of women with infant and preschool aged children are different compared to those with elementary, teenaged, or adult aged children. Women with children five years and older have their children at school for part (kindergarten) or all of the day during week days. Women with young children face different impacts on their emotional and physical wellbeing, adaptation processes, employment engagement, workload, social engagement, caregiving responsibilities, need for caregiving support, and other service needs (Baxter, Gray, Alexander, Strazdins, & Bittman, 2007; Gallegos, 2006; Pini & Mayes, 2012; Sibbel, 2010; Taylor & Simmonds, 2009; Whalen, 2013). The research project received interest from women in northwestern BC. More women from Hazelton responded to the research advertisements than any other community, in total approximately ten. However, many women were disqualified from participating in the research as they have children both under but also older than five years of age. Furthermore, women outside the study communities contacted me requesting to participate. To follow is more on the study participants.

IPA studies tend to use small sample sizes (Smith & Osborn, 2008). The intensive amount of detailed examination and subsequent analysis within and then across cases suggests it is "only possible to do the detailed, nuanced analysis associated with IPA on a small sample" (Smith, 2004, p. 42). In part, the sample size is also determined according to the "richness of the individual cases and the constraints one is operating under" (Smith & Osborn, 2008, p. 56). I chose six participants for this study. A sample size of six allowed for further protection of the participants' anonymity. They are from small, rural communities. Furthermore, a sample of six sought to ensure a richness of data in the event some participants would share less than others. In

sum, I recruited two women from each of the three communities of Hazelton, Smithers, and Terrace, BC. Participants were recruited via posters advertising the research project. Posters calling for participants were hung at major shopping centres in each of the three communities. An electronic version of the poster was posted on public Facebook groups for the three communities: Hazelton and area buy sell trade, Smithers Buy & Sell, Smithers/Houston Works, and Terrace BC & Surrounding Area. Research ethics governance approval was gained through the University of Northern British Columbia Research Ethics Board prior to recruitment of participants. Participants were provided with information on mental health and support services should they require psychosocial support post-interview. At the time of writing, I am not aware of any participant requiring such support as a result of engaging in this research project. To follow is a table showing the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Following this is a description of the context of the three northwestern BC communities of Hazelton, Smithers, and Terrace, BC:

Table 2

Participant Demographics

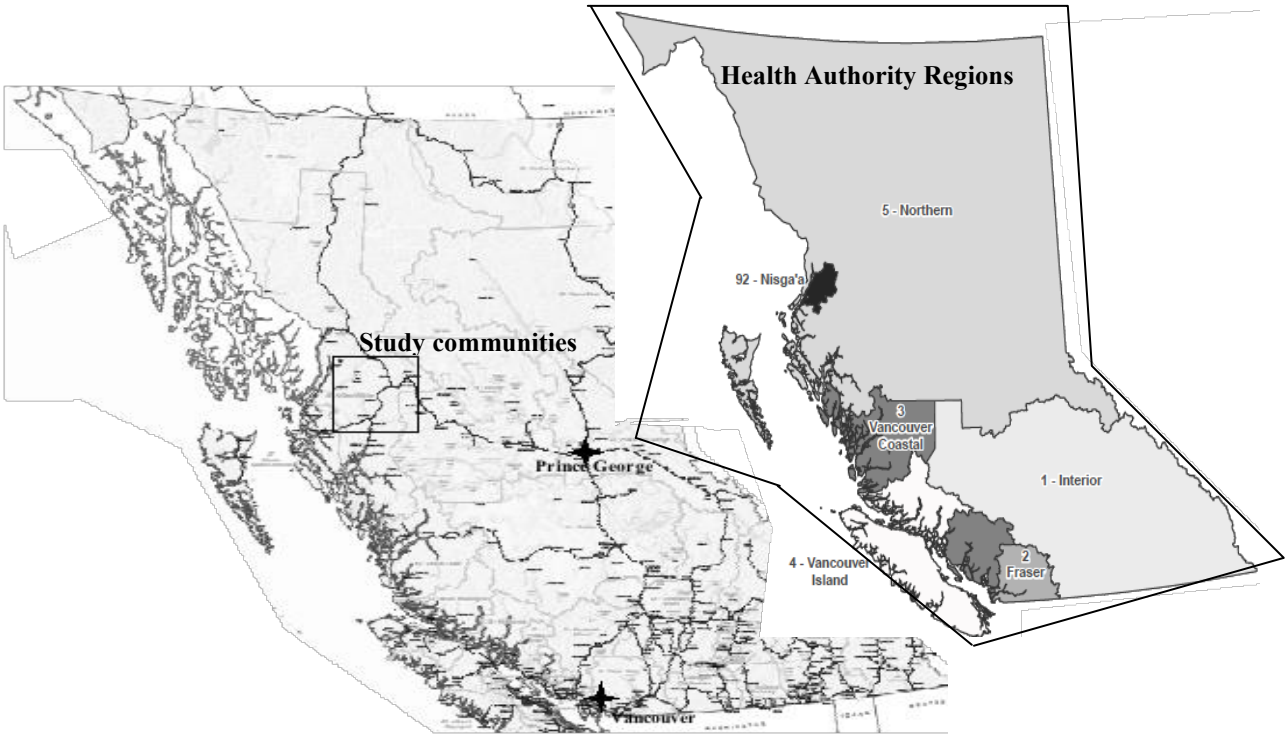
Participants	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
Age	30	38	33	29	30	25
Marital Status	Married	Married	Married	Married	Married	Common-law
Identity	European	European	First Nations	First Nations	First Nations	First Nations
# of Children	1	2	2	1	1	1
Age of Child(ren)	18 months	16 months	1	3	4	2
Employed	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Education	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	Some College, Professional Certificates	Some College	Some College	College Diploma
Partner's Profession	Skilled Trade	Equipment Operator	Skilled Trade	Labourer	Camp support staff	Equipment Operator
LDC – Industry	Mineral Extraction, Tourism	Mineral Extraction	LNG, Mineral Extraction	Mineral Extraction	Mineral Extraction	Mineral Extraction
Length of Relationship (in years)	4.5	10	10	10	5	8
Length of Time in LDC Lifestyle (years)	4.5	10	4	10	3	6

Northern BC: Hazelton, Smithers, and Terrace. Northern BC is characterized in large part by its expansiveness, diverse geography, and low population density. The communities in this study are located in the northwestern region of the Northern Health Authority (NHA), which covers approximately two-thirds of BC's landscape" (BC Stats as cited in NHA, 2010). In 2016, the total estimated population of the NHA was 282,725 or 5.9% of the population of BC (BC Stats, 2016). People in northern BC live in communities of various population sizes, that include:

diffusely populated settlements in regional districts, unincorporated communities, small incorporated municipalities, Indian reservations, small towns (population 2,500-19,999), and one small metropolitan urban settlement, Prince George, BC (population 74,003) (du Plessis, Beshiri, Bollman, & Clemenson, 2002; Statistics Canada, 2016g).

Figure 1

Map of British Columbia and Heath Authority Regions



Source: BC Stats 2008 and BC Stats, 2012

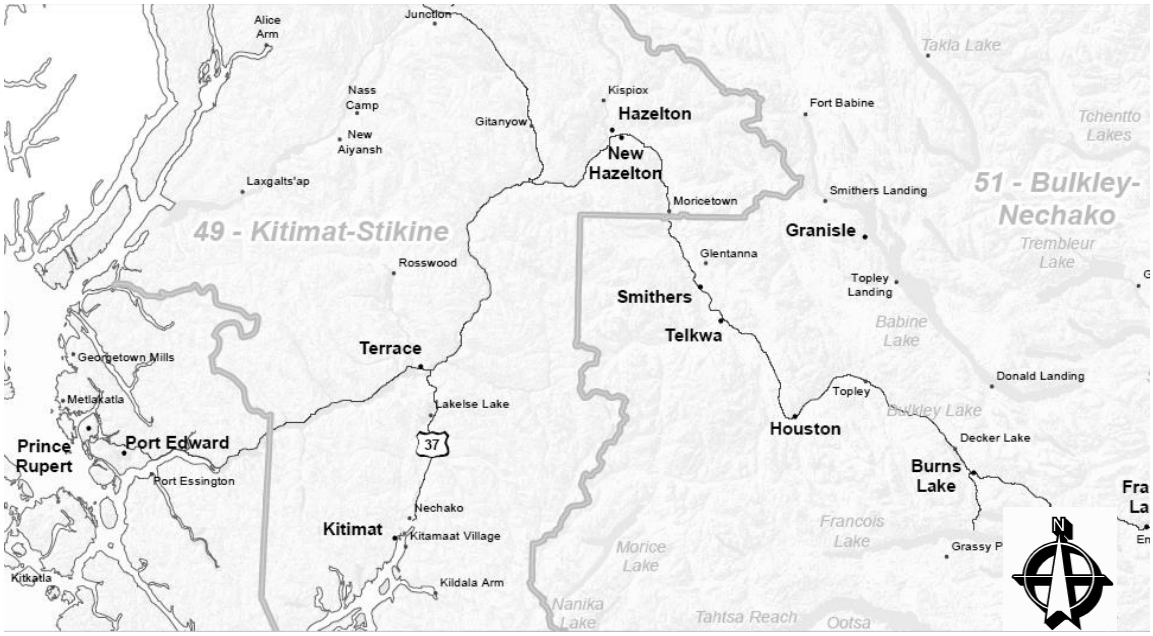
Northern BC is a rural, resource rich region. Historically, the forest and mining industries were the main economic drivers of northern BC. In more recent years, the region experienced a boom in its mining, oil, and gas industries. Economic growth and accompanying large infrastructure and utility projects in these industries have been grounded in high "demand, particularly from Asia, and surging mineral prices [which] have attracted considerable investment in exploration, helping to position BC as a potentially major source of global production" (Rescan, 2012, p. ii). In this context, rural communities have a history of resource

extraction for the benefit of urban centres (Schmidt, 2000); the region exists at the political and economic decision-making periphery in relation to urban, political and economic centres of the province and country (Collier, 2006). Furthermore, small, rural norther communities are typically economically dependent on single industry resource extraction. These communities are thus "economically dependent on raw resources that are shipped to metropolises in the south for processing and exporting" (Collier, 2006 as cited in Peters et al., 2010, p. 173). In particular, single resource based community economies often "depend upon the economic activity generated by one industry such as a mine, pulp mill, or oil drilling" (Schmidt, 2000, p. 339). Single-industry communities are limited in their economic diversification and thus are impacted by the "boom and bust" nature of the neo-liberal, capitalist global economy (Peters et al., 2010; Schmidt, 2000). Such an environment leaves communities in a state of uncertainty in terms of economic security.

The communities of Hazelton, Smithers, and Terrace, BC are located in the northwestern region of the NHA. Mountainous terrain, rivers, and isolated distances between communities characterize the region. The Yellowhead Highway 16 is the major corridor connecting the communities: traveling west 75 km from Smithers to Hazelton and then another 144km to Terrace. Prince George, the largest community in northern BC is 371km southeast of Smithers. The communities are situated in the First Nations' territories of the: Gitxsan (Hazelton), Wet'suwet'en (Smithers), and Nisga'a and Tsimshian (Terrace). The First Nations of this region have lived here since time immemorial. European contact with the local First Nations has taken place only in the recent past of the late 18th to 19th century (McDonald, 2006).

Figure 2

Map of Communities: Smithers, Terrace, and Hazelton



Source: BC Stats, 2012

Terrace serves as an important secondary regional centre to Prince George, the northern region's largest community (Markey et al., 2012). It is the largest community in the northwestern region of the NHA with a population of 11,486 (Statistics Canada, 2016k). The town of Smithers is noted for its unique culture in the region, owing in part to a prominent art and music scene as well as an active environmentally conscious citizenry. The community's population has remained relatively stable for the past 15 years with a 2001 population of 5,414, a 2006 population of 5,290, and a 2011 population of 5,404 (Statistics Canada, 2006c; Statistics Canada, 2016j). The greater Hazelton area includes the District of New Hazelton; the Village of Hazelton; the many unincorporated settlements and First Nations reserves of the Gitxsan and Wet'suwet'en. It is worth noting that the population of Hazelton increases remarkably by an additional 4,514 people with the inclusion of individuals living in the unincorporated settlements

(Statistics Canada, 2016a; Statistics Canada, 2016c-f; Statistics Canada, 2016i). The communities of Old Hazelton and New Hazelton serve as important service centres to the outlying unincorporated settlements and First Nations communities.

Table 3

Demographic Profile - Smithers, Hazelton, and Terrace, 2011

	Smithers	Hazelton[a]	Terrace
Total Population 2011	5,404	936	11,486
Age 20-64 (%)	62.6%	56.6%	58.9%
Age 25-39 (%)	26.8%	17%	23.5%
Median Age	37	44.2	38.8
Total Number of Census Families (married or common-law)	2,405	265	3,215
Census Families with Children at Home	625	95	1,320
Total Children in Census Families in Private Households	1,705	265	3,610
Children Under Six Years of Age	420	90	815
Children Under Six Years of Age (%)	(24.6%)	(33.9%)	(22.5%)

Source: Statistics Canada, 2016b, h, j, k.-j..

[a] Hazelton includes the aggregate population of the Village of Hazelton and the District of New Hazelton

Data collection. Data sources in this study included semi-structured interviews as well as focused participant observation, which facilitated my insight into their experience. I kept a researcher self-reflexivity journal to "adopt a more self-critical and reflective approach in research" (Allen-Collinson, 2009, p. 286). Self-reflexivity was vital to be clear and critical on my interpretation of the research; this is further discussed below. IPA requires a flexible data collecting tool that allows the research participant and researcher to engage in a dialogue which allows the conversation to shift according to the topics illuminated by the participant (Smith & Osborn, 2015). As such, the primary data collection tool was a semi-structured interview, which Smith and Osborn (2008) indicate is the "best way to collect data for an IPA study and the way

most IPA studies have been conducted" (p. 57). The authors provide that although the interview process focuses on following the respondent's interests it is still important to create "a schedule beforehand [as it] forces us to think explicitly about what we think/hope the interview might cover" (Smith & Osborn, 2008, p. 59). Prior to using the interview schedule I first tested it with a friend whose husband works in camp. Edits were made to the interview schedule from this pilot test.

I constructed the interview schedule following the guidance of Smith and Osborn (2008). The authors suggest articulating the broad range of issues relating to the phenomenon. Topics were placed in an appropriate, logical, sequence leaving sensitive topics for later in the interview. Relating to each topic were open-ended questions with associated probes and prompts (Smith & Osborn, 2008). As a researcher, I first built an understanding of the topic based on existing scholarly work. From the scholarly review I developed the interview schedule based on pre-existing knowledge of the women's context. As such, the interview schedule inquired into the women's experiences in the following life world domains, from micro to macro levels: individual, camp wife, social roles, children, and community. Importantly, the domains did not serve to dictate the data, but rather they acted as a guide to facilitate exploration of the phenomena (Groenewold, 2004). Questions embedded in these domains built on these topic areas. Through the questions and their associated prompts, participants were asked to expand on their individual experiences in each domain. The interview questions were open-ended, neutral, and avoided jargon (Smith & Osborn, 2008). Funneling was also used to elicit more detail from respondents. Funneling involves moving between general and specific questions to both engage and obtain a depth and breadth of data from the respondents (Smith & Osborn, 2008). For example, a question in the interview schedule "Domain Three – Children" included: How is it for

the kids with their father working in camp? Some of the prompts/probes associated with this broader question included: How do they adjust to his departure? Return?

The interviews were conducted face-to-face and independently with each participant in a location where they felt comfortable and safe: half the interviews took place at participants' homes and the other half outside the home. The interviews were between one to two hours in length; however, one interview lasted four hours. During the interviews, I allowed the women to share their stories on their terms (Smith & Osborn, 2015). The use of reflective, summarizing, and opened ended responses facilitated this process. The role of the researcher in IPA is to support the participants to express their thoughts and feelings and "to interpret people's mental and emotional state from what they say" (Smith & Osborn, 2008, p. 54). The goal here was not to attempt some kind of transcendental suspension of judgment via Husselerian "bracketing" so that the "impact of the researcher on the inquiry is constantly assessed and biases and preconceptions neutralized" (Lopez & Willis, 2004, p. 728). In qualitative research, I do not believe that humans are capable of being neutral research instruments that can "shed all prior personal knowledge to grasp the essential lived experiences of those being studied"…[through] actively strip[ping] his or her consciousness of all prior expert knowledge as well as personal biases (Natanson, 1973 as cited in Lopez & Willis, 2004, p.728). I believe it is more ethical and realistic to acknowledge and control for my subjective understanding of the participants' realities. The use of a reflexivity journal and other validity checking procedures, such as member checking and having an external auditor (my thesis supervisor) review my analysis, supported this work. Writing my personal statement, which outlines my position in the research, was an important reflective process to aid in my self-awareness of my positioning and function in the research. It is also a valuable resource to provide transparency to the reader regarding the

research. Sense-making of each respondent's story transpired through a process of analysis informed by my interpretations and knowledge and grounded in the words of the participants (Smith & Osborn, 2015). I strove for honesty and "truth" seeking as I worked to illuminate the "subjective meanings, actions and social contexts, as understood by them" (Fossey et al., 2002, p. 717). I worked exhaustively to honour any discrepancies by revisiting my assumptions, interpretations, and my presentation of findings with the participants. I achieved this through member checking. This process was followed until they were confident I was accurately presenting their life world. More on this process is discussed in the data collection and analysis sections.

Through the questions and their associated probes or prompts, participants were asked to expand on their individual experiences in each domain. The interview was an iterative process with the conversation organically moving forwards and back in the interview schedule as topics arose for participants. In this process, initial questions were modified and important and interesting areas then probed based on participants' responses (Smith & Osborn, 2008). Discussion in certain domains elicited responses relating to their interdependence and interconnectedness to others, either similarly or divergently. Data collection took place until such time that the topic was saturated, "that is when interviewees (subjects or informants) introduce[d] no new perspectives on the topic" (Groenewald, 2004, p. 11). The face-to-face interviews were audio recorded and I later transcribed them into word processing software. Participant observation notes and the reflexivity journal data were also transcribed.

In addition, I collected data via focused participant observation as the verbal description did not account for the full, rich account of a phenomenon (Maggs-Rapport, 2000). Observation took place upon entry, during the interview, and on exiting the participants' homes to capture the

non-verbal and sensory components of the participants' experiences and life world (Tracy, 2013). Data such as body language, decorations, smells, small-talk conversations, and any other sensory data were sought out to add to the milieu of data. The self-reflexivity journal I kept allowed me to reflect on and acknowledge my personal knowledge, experience, and perspective in this process (Hesse-Bibber, 2014). This is particularly important as I interpreted the intersectional and divergent understandings, assumptions, and meanings of the participants' experiences" (Lopez & Willis, 2004) in a co-construction of their experience.

I was guided by a feminist approach to research, which informed the interviewing style I used: establishing rapport, building trust, and listening deeply (Hesse-Biber, 2014). I collaborated with the participants to provide an opportunity to bring their voices to the fore, honestly present their experiences, and use research methods that flattened power imbalances between us (Hesse-Biber, 2014). I focused on active listening, allowing the participants to guide the discussion (as long as all domains are eventually covered), asking open-ended questions, and providing an authentic, non-judgmental presence to the women (Hesse-Biber, 2014). The interview flowed more like a conversation between the participant and I, with room for give and take therein. In addition, "[i]f the researcher has an agenda, this does not take precedence over the specific issues the participant wants to bring up. There is a premium paid on listening to the participant instead of one's own agenda" (Hesse-Bibber, 2014, p. 191). The data collecting and analysis processes were iterative to ensure there "is in fact a 'co-creation of meaning'" (Hesse-Biber, 2014, p.191). It was important that the women felt assured that their authentic voices were presented in the data. As further discussed in the ethics section, the issue of power and difference was discussed with the participants prior to and during the research.

Data analysis. Following Smith (2011), Smith et al., (2009) and Smith and Osborn (2015), analysis of the interviews proceeded through a series of steps that reflect the interpretative process of IPA. This was an iterative process; however it is described linearly so as to offer a cogent understanding of the process. The IPA analytical approach is grounded on the work of the authors above. It engages an idiographic approach in which, "the analysis slowly builds from the reading of individual cases [(data sets)] to claims for a group" (Smith et al., 1999, p. 219). As such, I first looked in detail at the data from one case prior to analyzing the others (Smith et al., 2009). Building on an idiographic approach, analysis began with one individual interview prior to moving on to the next one to begin with "particular examples and only slowly wor[k] up to more general claims" (Smith & Osborn, 2015, p.39). I read and re-read an interview line-by-line with focused attention to the detail of the transcript. During the first reading of an interview I also listened to the transcript audio to make notes of tone of voice, stress, intonation, and possible emotive expression (sighing, laughter, frustration) to build on the richness of the text and gain further insight from it. Smith et al., (2009) caution the researcher to take a slow, intentional approach to this process so as to give primacy to the participant's voice; they are the focus of the analysis. As Smith et al., (2009) recommend, I took notes on particularly potent recollections from the interview or initial interpretations of the data not only during the re-reading of each transcript but also while I was transcribing them. The observations were set aside for a while so as to allow me to more fully enter the participant's world and "gain an understanding of how narratives can bind certain sections of an interview together" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 82).

Upon completion of engagement and re-familiarizing myself with the text, I began initial noting or coding of the data; "this is close to free textual analysis" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 83).

With initial noting on the text I did not place rules on what I could comment on (Smith & Osborn, 2015). The data was then analyzed and coded according to descriptive, linguistic, and conceptual data. This process began with a focus on the descriptive and linguistic content and then moved towards developing initial descriptive accounts of the participant's experience. I articulated the way in which a woman spoke about these experiences and then developed initial interpretations of how they understood their experiences (Callary, Rathwell, & Young, 2015). This initial step in the analysis was time consuming and reviewed "semantic content and language on a very exploratory level" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 83). With descriptive analysis I explored the respondent's key words, phrases, and explanations to identify those items of importance in their lifeworld (important objects, events, experiences) (Smith et al., 2009). For example, I considered their "descriptions, assumptions, sound bites, acronyms, idiosyncratic figures of speech, and emotional responses" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 84). I worked towards connecting how the participant described things that mattered to them "(relationship processes, places, events, values, and principles) to the meaning of those things for the participant (what those relationships, processes, places, etc. are *like* for the participant)" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 83). The purpose of this step was to start to articulate how the participant talks and thinks about as well as understands the topic (Smith et al., 2009). Linguistic notes provided me with an understanding of the manner in which the content and its meaning were presented by the participant (Smith et al., 2009). The focused participant observation notes were also used to support my recollection of the participant's non-verbal expression and other contextual data in the analysis. I made note of the language (pronoun use, repetition, metaphor) and the prosody of speech (intonation, tone of voice, emphasis, laughter, and hesitation) and exemplifications of meaning tied to non-verbal communication used by participants. I noted what a person said in

terms of the "similarities and differences, echoes, amplifications, and contradictions" (Smith & Osborn, 2015, p. 40). Linguistic comments allowed me to build an understanding of "the ways in which the content and meaning were presented" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 88). My notes sought to summarize, paraphrase, find associations or connections, and work towards developing initial interpretations.

After the initial note taking, the analysis became thicker and more interpretative. As the coding, or note taking, became more interpretative I moved towards making conceptual comments. Conceptual coding can take an interrogative approach; I asked questions of the text, such as "What is her intention? Hope? Who is she concerned about when she states__?" (Smith et al., 2009). In moving away from the participant's explicit claims there was a shift towards the participant's overall understanding of what they were discussing (Smith et al., 2009). In this analytical process, I balanced my understanding of a participant's word, sentence or phrase with my attempt at articulating what it meant to the participant (Smith et al., 2009). However, this was also an opportunity to build connections between my pre-understanding and newly forming understanding of the participant's life world (Smith et al., 2009). The interpretations I developed at this juncture would expectedly draw from my experiential and/or professional knowledge (Smith et al., 2009). Next, conceptual coding allowed me to establish various provisional interpretations without necessarily ascribing concrete answers or understandings (Smith et al., 2009). Reid, Flowers, and Larkin (2005) add that IPA

> makes these inferences cautiously, and with an awareness of the contextual and cultural ground against which data are generated, but it is willing to make interpretations that discuss meaning, cognition, affect and action. These interpretations may be drawn from a range of theoretical perspectives; provided

> that they are developed around a central account of the participants' experiences (their phenomenological world) (p.20).

In the next step of analysis, I developed emerging themes. First, I worked with the notes to synthesize them into concise phrases "to capture the essential quality of what was found in the text" (Smith & Osborn, 2015, p. 41). In this process, I focused on smaller pieces of data and also the whole case, analyzing the exploratory notes involved looking for relationships between them while also keeping in mind the entire transcript (Smith et al., 2009). The idea at this juncture was to distill the vast amount of detail produced through the coding/note taking process while "maintaining complexity, in terms of mapping the interrelationships, connections, and patterns between the exploratory notes" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 91). Analytically, this required a shift to work primarily with the notes instead of the transcription (Smith et al., 2009). These phrases were then clustered into themes, which shifted "the response to a slightly higher level of abstraction" (Smith & Osborn, 2015, p. 41).

After developing the emergent themes, I listed them and moved through a process of seeking out patterns to slowly cluster them together and gain an encompassing analysis of the participant's experience (Smith & Osborn, 2015). To identify connections in the themes required an intentional process of finding relationships amongst them. Smith et al., (2009) offered useful methods for this analytical step, which included: abstraction, polarization, contextualization, and numeration. Respectively, this involved

> putting like with like and develop a new name for a cluster...[that] can be called a 'super-ordinate theme';...examining oppositional relationships between emergent themes;...attending to temporal, cultural and narrative themes...to highlight constellations of emergent themes which relate to particular narrative moments, or

> key life events; [and]...taking account of the frequency with which a theme is supported (Smith et al., 2009, pp.96-98).

After this analytical step, themes were "checked against the transcript to make sure the connections work for the primary source material" (Smith & Osborn, 2015p. 45). The clusters of themes were organized into a table of super-ordinate themes. Each super-ordinate theme had associated sub-ordinate themes and accompanying examples from the data.

The above process was newly repeated for each interview. This allowed the data from each case to "speak on its own terms rather than being overly influenced by what other participants have said" (Smith & Osborn, 2015, p. 45). As such, a separate table of themes was created for each case. To follow is a table detailing the super- and the associated sub-ordinate themes for each participant.

Table 4

Participant Theme Tables

Participant 1	
Theme 1- LDC Lifestyle: 1.1 LDC lifestyle expectations and adaptation 1.2 Migration and integration into community 1.3 Future in LDC **Theme 3 – Motherhood:** 3.1 New role 3.2 Task-based coping 3.3 Adapted mother **Theme 5 – Support:** 5.1 Psychosocial well-being and mental health 5.2 Defining support 5.3 Support: social (informal) and formal services 5.4 Personal coping strategies	**Theme 2 – Adjusting Home Life with Baby:** 2.1 Adapting to baby 2.2 Father/husband's parenting, co-parenting, and baby's response 2.3 LDC home life – couple (integration/separation) **Theme 4 – Identity/Roles:** 4.1 Camp wife 4.2 Encompassing role 4.3 Domestic self (stay-at-home parent) 4.4 Return to work/career woman
Participant 2	
Theme 1- Adaptation: 1.1 Planning for camp lifestyle 1.2 LDC lifestyle as a parent 1.3 Adapting to balance of career (public) and motherhood (private) life 1.4 Children's adjustment/adaptation **Theme 3 – Resilience:** 3.1 Traditional gender roles to maintain lifestyle 3.2 Routine 3.3 Healthy relationship 3.4 Identify LDC benefits and reducing cognitive dissonance as coping mechanisms 3.5 Re-entry into workforce **Theme 5 – Identity:** 5.1 Self as professional 5.2 Self as strong 5.3 Self as mother	**Theme 2 – Roles and Responsibilities:** 2.1 Caregiving for children and supporting their adaptation to camp lifestyle 2.2 Supporting husband to cope with LDC lifestyle as a parent 2.3 Receiving support from husband **Theme 4 – Barriers and Needs:** 4.1 Single parenting 4.2 Childcare and workload support 4.3 Support from husband **Theme 6: The Nature of the LDC Lifestyle:** 6.1 Workforce organization and the resource extraction sector in northern BC 6.2 Experiencing transition with work/furlough schedule 6.3 Benefits of lifestyle 6.4 The future 6.5 Social implications

Participant 3	
Theme 1 – Roles: 1.1 Leadership and coordination 1.2 Supporting husband 1.3 Gender roles **Theme 3 – Family and LDC:** 3.1 Process of adaptation 3.2 Perfect family 3.3 LDC, father, and children	**Theme 2 – Resilience, Support, and Adaptation:** 2.1 Facilitating husband's re-integration at furlough 2.2 Resilient self 2.3 Paid domestic labour 2.4 Supportive relationship **Theme 4 – Identity:** 4.1 Situation (in LDC) self 4.2 Career self
Participant 4	
Theme 1 – Adaptation to and Ongoing Challenge with LDC: 1.1 Adapted self: pre/post motherhood 1.2 Separation and loneliness 1.3 Daughter's adaptation **Theme 3 – Entry into, Maintenance of, and Future in Lifestyle:** 3.1 Entry into and rationalization of LDC 3.2 Relationship to support maintenance of LDC 3.3 Remaining in LDC 3.4 Future	**Theme 2 – LDC Rotations and Seasonality:** 2.1 Off-season 2.2 End of off-season 2.3 In camp 2.4 Furlough
Participant 5	
Theme 1 – Rationale for and Maintenance of LDC: 1.1 Quality of life 1.2 LDC Normalized in Community 1.3 Supportive Strategies/mechanisms to maintain LDC 1.4 Daughter's Adaptation **Theme 3 – LDC Context:** 3.1 LDC: employer and camp context 3.2 Fluidity in gender roles	**Theme 2 – Daily Life/Life World:** 2.1 Daily routine as impacted by LDC 2.2 Self valuing her employment 2.3 Self vs. social expectations and the LDC normative in community 2.4 Self as engaged in sports/the sports' community

Participant 6	
Theme 1 – Parenting and Motherhood: 1.1 Experience of motherhood over time 1.2 Facilitating child's adaptation to LDC lifestyle 1.3 Understanding self in parent role 1.4 Father/child connection **Theme 3 – Adaptive Strategies and Support to Maintain LDC:** 3.1 Support from grandmothers 3.2 Other services 3.3 Adaptive self 3.4 Self as family nucleus 3.6 LDC and role division	**Theme 2 – LDC:** 2.1 Experiencing LDC over time 2.2 LDC work and furlough rotation 2.3 Camp culture 2.4 LDC in the future

After this, analysis took place across the cases. I looked across the themes not only for shared higher order qualities but also for participants' unique idiosyncrasies in a theme (Smith et al., 2009). I then created a final master theme table of group themes. Themes were prioritized based on prevalence and the richness of particular accounts to not only highlight the themes but also shed light on their various facets (Smith & Osborn, 2005). The "unfolding narrative for a theme thus provide[d] a careful interpretative analysis of how participants manifest the same theme in particular and different ways" (Smith, 2011, p. 24). Importantly, this process also involved "expanding, delineating, and delimiting operational definitions pertaining to these higher-order themes to ensure their coherency with constituent supporting quotes" (Callary, Rathwell, & Young, 2015, p. 69). Final super-ordinate themes provide a meta-story of experience in terms of women's meaning of the camp work lifestyle.

Data validity. To support valid qualitative research I made use of qualitative validity checking procedures: member checking, researcher reflexivity, and checking with an external auditor (my research supervisor). Member checking involves "taking data and interpretations back to the participants in the study so that they can confirm the credibility of the information and narrative account" (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 127). I made use of summarizing and reflective response techniques to ensure I was capturing the intended meaning of the participants during the interview process (Crist & Tanner, 2003; Hesse-Biber, 2014). During analysis, I contacted each of the participants to ask them if the themes associated with their interview made sense, were grounded in adequate evidence, and provided a realistic and accurate account of their experience (Creswell & Miller, 2000). This is further discussed below.

I contacted each woman to reflect, interpret, and elaborate on the findings in a co-creation of meaning. In an effort to close any gap in understanding it is important that "both the researcher and researched meanings be in conversation with one another" (Hesse-Biber, 2014, p. 190). Each woman was emailed a copy of the transcripts from her interview to help her recollection of the interview. Additionally, I sent a copy of a table of themes for their specific interview. The table included the theme name, its comprehensive description and interpretation, and accompanying transcript excerpts. Of note is the words of gratitude I received from one woman after reading her table of themes She indicated "I feel very validated by your writing and reflection of our conversation" (Participant 1). The reflexivity journal I kept during the interviews was also an important tool for me to "check in" on my placement in the research and pre-understanding of the participant's context. Through a process of honest reflection on my thoughts, beliefs, values, and emotions that emerged both during the interview and later in analysis I worked to honour the women's stories. I sought out any discrepancies I created by

revisiting my assumptions, interpretations, and my presentation of findings with the participants. This process was followed until they were confident I accurately presented their life world. In addition, an external auditor, my research supervisor, provided me with feedback on the viability of the themes. He reviewed the themes and their supporting codes to provide me with feedback. I kept detailed notes of my analysis process to aid in his assessment of my findings (Smith et al., 2009).

Anticipated Ethical Issues

A feminist perspective on research ethics contributes to this review of ethical concerns. Maintaining participant anonymity is a key ethical concern. Anonymity was offered to participants as they were given discretion to complete the interview at a location of their choice. Participant identifying data has been concealed in this study. All data was locked during the project and women were informed that it would be destroyed within one year of the thesis defense or within two years from data collection, whichever was first. The women were also given the choice to participate (or not) or disengage from the research at any time. This plan was explained verbally as well as on the consent forms to the women. No one chose to disengage from the research. One woman asked to have a short piece of her interview redacted, which I honored.

From a feminist perspective, I acknowledged that research of women, in particular working class women in northern rural BC, must consider their experiences with oppression. The incorporation of feminist ethics in research focuses on concerns regarding "issues of power relations, confidentiality, and anti-oppressive practice" (Bell, 2014, p. 78). Through awareness and self-reflexivity and caution in the research process it was my intention to not replicate these processes with the participants. I carefully and conscientiously considered my role as a

researcher with the participants. In addition to the ethical pieces discussed above, feminist ethic concerns of particular note to the research included: disclosure of potential deception, power between researcher and subject, ownership of research, ensuring human dignity, self-determination, and safety (Bell, 2014). There is a significant likelihood that my perception of gender roles and feminism could have been divergent from that of the women. I approached the research understanding that women in this study may have differing values and perspectives to me regarding feminism and gender roles. Thus, from the start of the research and throughout, I was clear with the participants on the theoretical perspectives and personal perspective I brought to the research table. I also gave primacy to the women to present their experiences as I listened and honoured their voices.

From a feminist perspective, consideration of the relationship of power and authority between the participants and the research is important. To address this I was honest with the women in regards to my position in the research. To support trust and rapport building, I explained to the participants my intent for the research and its personal relevance to me. I explained that I grew up in Hazelton, BC, am from a working class family, and have experience working and having a partner who worked in camp. Certainly, being a working class woman with experience in the LDC lifestyle was not enough to fully understand their experiences (Hesse-Biber, 2014). It is important to note that, owing to its fluidity, my status as either an insider or outsider could have changed in a single interview (Hesse-Biber, 2014). However, in sharing our identities and stories of both similarity and difference a process of reciprocity and rapport was developed in the interview process. This allowed for a break down in traditional notions of power and authority (Hesse-Biber, 2014).

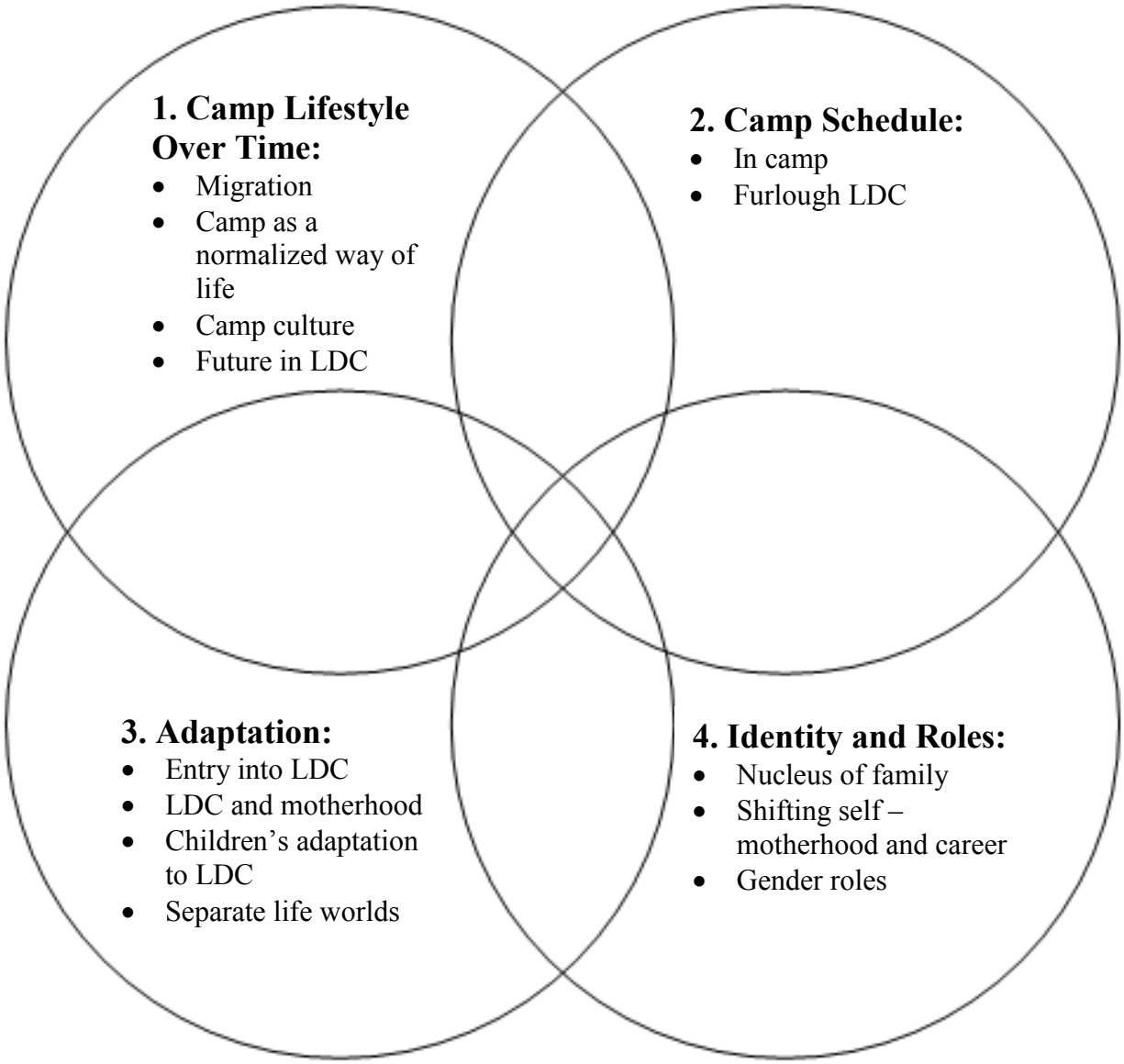
In terms of human dignity, self-determination, and safety, of primary concern was the women's safety. When presenting the research project to a potential participant, they were asked if they have any safety concerns, at home or elsewhere, that would interfere with their participation. I openly shared that issues of gender roles and relationships were to be discussed in the interview. Women were also emailed the participant information letter and consent form ahead of the interview. In this form was a list of the interview schedule question topics. In reviewing this form the women had the opportunity to be fully informed of the research questions and intentions and thus decide to participate (or not) in the research. Further to their dignity and self-determination is respect for the participants' experiences and perceptions as they view them. Throughout the entire research process-from first contact to final analysis-I openly and non-judgmentally discussed divergences and intersections of agreement on their experiences. My role in this process was to focus significantly on querying for clarification, asking open-ended questions, listening, and being forthright about the basis of my perceptions. Collectively, these ethical considerations strove to do the participants no harm. I wished to engage in a process that not only honoured their voices but also provided them with safety and anonymity. The final research product ultimately belongs to the university and me. However, the findings will be co-produced with the research participants to ensure their voice is fairly represented within it. I disclosed to the participants the final location of the research: the UNBC library and each of the libraries in their respective communities. Each participant will also receive a copy.

Chapter Four: Research Findings

Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) provides an opportunity to bring to the fore ordinary everyday experience (Smith, et al., 2015). IPA considers both the descriptive and interpretative accounts of a phenomenon. After analyzing each interview independently, I analyzed the table of themes as a collective to seek out patterns of similarity between them. The participants' themes were divided and re-grouped according to shared qualities into four super-ordinate themes with associated sub-ordinate themes: camp context over time, camp schedule, adaptation, and identity and roles. Smith (2011) indicated the importance of prevalence in determining themes and recommends establishing themes based on "half the participants…for sample sizes of 4-8" (p. 24). As such, in this study each sub-ordinate theme required at minimum three of the research participants share that theme. To follow is a diagram of the super- and sub-ordinate themes. It is important to note that while each theme is written as a category they are not discreet silos. Each theme interweaves as the experiences are permeable; they are mutually related and influencing one another (Dukas, 2014). To follow is a diagram of the final themes, which illustrates the relationship between them:

Figure 3

Diagram of Super-ordinate and Sub-ordinate Themes



The findings provide insight into both the general, whole shared experience while also elucidating unique, specific experiences of the women. IPA ought to indicate the "ways in which participants represent unique idiosyncratic instances [in conjunction with] higher order qualities" (Smith et al., 2012, p. 101). Each sub-ordinate theme provides insight into the variability, convergence, and divergence amongst the women (Smith, 2011). I include a number of thick,

verbatim extracts throughout the findings to provide a fine-grained context to the findings. The extracts were minimally altered with changes associated with protecting their anonymity or deletion of filler words such as "um" and "ah". I did not change the women's grammar in the extracts unless word insertions, which are found in brackets, were required to help the reader understand the passage. From a feminist perspective, the intent in providing varied extracts is to also provide an opportunity for the full, honest exploration of the women's stories and voices.

Camp Lifestyle Over Time

Women in the study experienced the LDC lifestyle as an external force that shapes their life choices and context. In particular, for half of the women it resulted in moving for work to be closer to the camp work site. One woman experienced multiple moves throughout British Columbia and the Yukon as a result of the LDC employment context. As an external force, the women understood the camp lifestyle as outside of one's locus of control in that it cannot be changed, must be accepted, and no other immediate or readily accessible choices for employment are available to the family. As such, the lifestyle is accepted as a steady and accepted norm: as one woman stated, "It's just what we do". However, the women sought to mitigate their limited choice in this context by moving closer to their husbands' work sites. A majority of the participants described camp culture and their perception of its impact on them and/or the wider community. In consideration of the future, the women overwhelmingly accepted continuation of the LDC lifestyle. Challenges exist with the lifestyle; however they were overcome through the women's use of adaptive strategies and the stronger weight of LDC benefits. Consider the following sub-ordinate themes: migration, camp as a normalized way of life, camp culture, and a future in LDC.

Migration. Half of the women had migrated to their current community of residence for their partner's camp work; all of the women who migrated had grown up in southern BC and then eventually settled north with their partners. Migration to their current community of residence was important to foster the relationship with their partner, reduce the transportation time for their partners between camp and home, and build a sense of stability for the women and their families.

Participant 1 and her husband migrated more frequently than any of the other couples: throughout BC and in the Yukon both prior to and once in their relationship. Her husband had worked for a variety of LDC employers. In time, constantly moving to new communities became problematic for her as she indicated their need to gain a sense of stability in the context of LDC employment. Stability included shifting from a primary focus on her husband's career to an assertion of the importance of developing her own. This required negotiation with her husband as previously their moves focused on his employment:

> Um, [in the city], he got a brilliant job offer. Well it looked brilliant on the surface, um, we went there, [but] my background's [in a professional degree], there is so much competition for [this professional degree], like, for any sort of [professional degree] job any sort of professional job there that I ended up working in a, um, ugh sports store. Like minimum wage, sports store, doing customer services….So the deal was that because his job had taken us to [the city], it was my turn for a job to take us somewhere else (Participant 1).

Although she found career track employment in this community she also indicated a need to balance her husband's career stability and growth, future opportunities for him to work more at the shop in town, and reduce his travel time to and from camp. She indicated leading this decision for the couple:

> We ended up, um, we were looking at all sorts of different postings. The posting for my job came up. It was, it was posted, ugh, there were seven different places it

> was posted. One of them was [this community], which happened to be my first choice, being that it's a small town….And it was like, well, of all the places we could go, of places that there are opportunities for both of us (Participant 1).

Reducing the travel time between camp and home influenced Participant 3's decision to migrate to her current town of residence. The insufficient amount of time together at furlough was problematic for the family; particularly considering her husband had started camp work shortly after the birth of her children:

> So he was getting like ported out to like [this mining camp] and, and places north of Prince George, and so, when he would have his time off, if it was a week then we might get to see him for 2 days. So that was particularly difficult…and so that's why one of the reason we decided on [this community], is wh-, it was pretty central to a lot of places he might get called out to....[And my hubby] grew up here. So he's very familiar and comfortable in northern BC here, um, he did all of his post-secondary education here as well…and [he] did all of his, um, secondary school down in [the neighbouring town]. So, this is the area he's comfortable with (Participant 3).

Fostering an opportunity for her husband to connect with his family and community of origin also impacted their decision to move for camp. Once his career development and employment, as well as the family time needs were met, Participant 3 went through a process of reflection on her career needs. This demonstrates her focus on her husband and family's needs as secondary to her own while also indicating her resilience and adaptability in this context to establish her career:

> Um, and we were coming here [for my hubby's] work so then I thought, well what the heck am I going to with myself? And in the process…, I thought well why don't I just write the [professional] licensing exam? So, I did and that's how this office came to be (Participant 3).

In addition to accessing employment and reduced travel time, building a sense of community through social integration and locating a community with adequate health care services and recreation were also identified as supporting stability in LDC. A small, northern "hub" community was also seen as ideal to meet relational and service needs:

> This is a good fit. It's a small town, but it's not so small that you don't have enough there…You can get groceries, you can have a life, you have community events that are happening. It's not like you are living in the middle of nowhere and it's like, 'Ok, well we're thinking of starting a family. So it's two hours to the nearest hospital' (Participant 1).

A pseudo-family context in the settlement community provided her with a highly valued sense of belonging in the community, marking the end of ongoing migration:

> I've spent the time and spending the time going forward with the people who I see being a part of that community…like [my friend] up the street…we both want our kids to grow up kind of like cousins (Participant 1).

Fit and belonging are valuable in terms of social integration and support, which Participant 1 desired after having moved numerous times. Participant 3 indicated that despite her efforts to build a sense of belonging in her current community they decided they would move again. This decision was supported by an LDC employment context, which does not require the family to remain in one location. The family will move in a few months to a different community in the south of BC to work towards establishing a stronger sense of community integration and connection:

> Um, and like how when, or, when we want to make that move down to [the city] right now, um, we tried to lay roots down in [this community], and this was gonna be our home base for [my hubby], and that didn't really work out so, I'm happy that we can just move and, and [my hubby] is fine with that. So it's a better move for our whole family and it doesn't really affect [my hubby's] work at all (Participant 3).

As she and the family gained comfort in the LDC lifestyle the notion of migrating again was not problematic for her, as long it did not interfere with her husband's work and facilitated an opportunity to try again at establishing a longer term residency in a community.

In contrast, Participant 2 met her partner while they both worked in camp in northern BC. Based in a southern BC city she engaged in camp work for approximately

four months per year shifting to multiple work sites throughout Canada. She moved north to build the relationship with her (future) husband and she slowly reduced her time in the field. Her choice to migrate north was facilitated by her employer having an office in the community and her husband wishing to settle in that community, which is located close to his immediate family. Migrating north was experienced as a challenge for her as she struggled to integrate into the community:

> And so when moved here I didn't have a lot in common with a lot of people that I was coming into contact with. And it really wasn't until our office expanded, cause it, in the beginning it was like 4 people [Laughter] (Participant 2).

She described a shift from an urban to a rural culture with a focus on family and children as divergent from her sense of self and normal social context, at the outset. This impacted her sense of belonging in the community:

> And when I got here everyone had like 4 kids and nobody worked and I was like, everyone's like 'Oh, well when are you gonna have kids?' and I'm like 'I don't know' [Laughter]. Like nobody knew what to talk to me about, right, like they'd be like talking about their kids and their daycares and their kindergarten schedules and stuff like that and nobody knew what to talk to me about. [Laughter] (Participant 2).

The women have varied experiences settling in their respective communities in terms of their sense of self and belonging within rural, northern communities The LDC lifestyle is characterized as constraining yet also they also strove to find choice and control in the context. Stability in this context centres on employment opportunities, social integration, and relationship development.

Camp as a normalized way of life. The women in the study normalized camp life: it is unchangeable, beneficial, and connected to their identity. The women accepted there is limited high paying employment in their communities. Camp is also known as a resource extraction labour organization standard, which meets the needs of the sector. LDC is connected with being embedded in the lifestyle for multiple generations and is seen as an unquestionable external force one must accept and adapt to in a competitive labour market. Furthermore, camp work is understood as normal in the community as it is the prevalent form of employment; within this context they were able to accept it, see its benefits, and at times defend this form of labour organization. It is connected with their sense of stability and a sense of self.

The women understood camp employment as necessary due to the limited choices for high paying employment for their partners who work as labourers or trades people:

> I don't know, we tried for a long time for [my hubby] to work in town because we always wanted, we didn't want to have this camp life thing, but there's just no good paying jobs, especially for men who are undereducated in town. And guys just wanna, you know, get a good, good job and make lots of money and, you can't, you just can't do it here (Participant 2).

> Like my brother works his butt off in town and doesn't make nearly as much as my husband does. And, it's like, he probably works just as hard. Um, so I'm not sure. It would be nice if there was something like that in town. I think it's a good way to pay your bills and live comfortably (Participant 4).

Despite efforts to find in-community employment, Participant 2 had to accept there was no other choice for higher paying employment for her partner. She appeared to resolve herself to the camp lifestyle so the family could have financial stability. Furthermore, she understood camp work supports her husband's sense of confidence and well-being, which is tied to him being a breadwinner for the family. She had historically been the breadwinner in the relationship and saw a need for her husband to earn an equivalent or higher income so they could start a family. LDC was accepted as the only route available to the family to achieve this goal:

> [Camp is] [d]efinitely not ideal. I mean, but so many people do it, and it's better to, it's better to have the two incomes and the, the security of that then you know, and I know that, I know it's good for [my hubby's] mental health too to be working and to be providing a good living, you know, like. When he was working in town and he was working at the [retail store], I think he always had feelings of inadequacy about, like, not being able to make very much money and, I made like four times as much as he did [Laughter]…I said, you know, it was really important for us, for him to get that job in [camp] because, you know that meant that year round income so that I could, I could take a year off on maternity leave, right (Participant 2).

She was able to reinforce traditional notions of male breadwinner as important to support her husband's mental health. Participant 3 also echoed this experience with her husband. Camp provided him with the opportunity to become the breadwinner of the family, an ideal she was also able to support for her husband's well-being:

> Yeah, I, I think that honestly part of it for [my hubby] was that I was always the higher income earner. Always. And that this is the first time he's ever surpassed me in earning income. Especially in the last couple years, like I, I'm just starting out in [my new profession] and so, I'm like, doing moderately well but, like he, made double what I did. And so I think that might have been kinda what he was looking for was, he'd grown up with the picture of providing for his family. And now he feels like he's in it, like he's doing it (Participant 3).

Importantly, for Participant 2, she was able to rationalize the camp lifestyle in this process as she indicated a strong effort was made to obtain alternative employment in community and she normalized it as a common form of employment.

LDC is accepted in terms of the resource extraction sector norm. Women see themselves as powerless to the resource extraction sector and its accompanying labour force organization requirements. In particular, the resource extraction sector is further normalized through both generational integration into LDC employment and through its predominance in community employment. Participant 3 indicated two generations in her family had worked in logging camps, which supported her in understanding and normalizing her expectations of resource extraction labour organization:

> I guess historically there was some camp work too because I remember my grandpa, like, stayed in camp work when he was logging…Yeah, and so it isn't necessarily a new. I think maybe the new thing that was tried out was, like, the build a town for the families and, and maybe it turned out to not be the most profitable way to do it. Um, I think that if you're working in, in industry, like a resource industry area, sometimes you just have to go to where the work is. And if the work is out in the wilderness, then, people are gonna do those jobs whether it's you or someone else…And so they, you do have, like if it's work to be done it's gonna be done (Participant 3).

Participant 3 balanced an understanding of herself as embedded in the LDC context: measuring the positive, negative, inevitable aspects of resource extraction/LDC labour organization. She indicated prior to having children she always imagined having a perfect family with her husband/the children's father home every night:

> I mean my idea of what I thought a perfect family life would be isn't what they are growing up with…Um, but, I, I mean, working in industry is a like future for a lot of people so. On the other hand I'm also not that concerned about it because they'll [the children] see how we've coped with it. [Laughter] (Participant 3).

She has resolved to accept that LDC employment meets her family's goals and her children will cope through their observation of the parents' resilience. She also understands the nature of labour organization in the resource extraction sector in British Columbia over time: her grandparents' generation to present day with her partner. She has accepted this labour force organization as dependent on needs of industry and as a new norm in resource extraction vis-à-vis company towns. LDC is understood as meeting industry's profit maximizing needs with workers, families, and communities disengaged from decision-making processes around how the workforce organization impacts them. The women have a sense of a limited locus of control over the LDC context. In part, this is attributed to their understanding that camp workers are easily replaceable; there is high competition for camp labour:

> There aren't as many opportunities for, um, for really any jobs when you get to a big centre, but especially when you're dealing with skilled labourers there's much competition, um, that there's a lot of, there's a lot of pressure on

> [workers]…which, was to be expected, to ugh, going there. But for [my hubby] to find a job he had a really, but, for him to get anything else there he was pretty much hooped. And, company's use that against people….To lower the wages. And, or maintain the wages and the wages on the surface look really good, um, but then they demand all sorts of crazy working hours out of people and well, like, you can't go home until this job is finished. And so he'd be working from, you know, 06:00 in the morning til 11:00 at night (Participant 1).

In contrast, Participant 1 described moving to a more rural community where her husband started LDC employment. This was in response to the competition for skilled-labour positions in more urban settings and the associated working conditions. Camp life provided her husband extended periods of time at home; however she also described him continuously working in the company shop even when out of camp:

> Even when he was home he wasn't there. I got to manage everything on my own anyways… Because, off is usually 'So Monday to Friday can you be in the [the shop]?' [Laughter]. So, it's not like off is he can be home working on projects doing things. Off is, he's home in the mornings and in the evenings and he might drop by at lunch time, if he's forgotten his lunch. But, I'll be back at work so. Whatever he does it's his thing anyways (Participant 1).

Participant 1 also echoed Participant 3's assertion that the resource extraction and associated industries define where one must go for work and the conditions around this employment.

Participant 4 fully accepted LDC as part of her identity and integrated it into her life. She described herself and family as stable and steady in LDC. Her husband worked in camp before and has for the duration of their relationship; it is what he has always done without question. The LDC lifestyle was interwoven in to her family's sense of community, as it is what most individuals in his home community do for employment. Its normalization and prevalence was indicated by a return to her husband's home community to find no one was home as everyone was out at camp working:

> Um, where he's from… it's pretty common for most of the people who live there work in camps. It was just, it was just how it is, I guess… It's, there's been times

> where we go to [my hubby's home community] and there's like nobody in town because they're all in camp (Participant 4).

Therefore, camp was understood as an expected and predominant form of employment for most families, thus building her idea that it is acceptable for her family. She also normalized the camp lifestyle by recognizing a lack of other employment options closer to home in this region of BC. Working in camp was seen as inevitable and expected for working-aged men wanting a higher income; there are no feasible options for higher income to be earned in town:

> He, but, like he has expressed that if he could make that money in [town] and come home every night, he would…Um, but, yeah, money drives him to keep going. [Laughter] (Participant 4).

Her concerns with the lifestyle were mostly limited to physical distance in the relationship and associated loneliness. However, this challenge was not so significant that she would not defend or protect the idea that LDC should be maintained: "I find everything, it was just normal…It still is just normal" (Participant 4). This is exemplified by her reluctance to discuss any political and regulation concerns with LDC, despite knowledge on the topic:

> Yeah. I don't hear a lot of positive things about them [partner's company], I find his company's in the newspaper a lot…Even with the [mine], like, blockade thing that happened. I'm not fully aware of what even happened with that. So I just don't give it much thought at all….I think the companies take care of themselves pretty well….They [government regulation] might, um, maybe confuse things a little more (Participant 4).

Financially, LDC provided a desirable lifestyle for her family and thus discussions on larger challenges with this form of work force organization or industry activity were avoided for fear of possible implications for her husband's livelihood. Such discussion was also personalized as a possible affront to her family's decision for her husband to work in camp and her sense of self.

Participant 5 echoed a normalized understanding of LDC due to its prevalence as a form of employment in the community; she also understood it as being overall beneficial to the

community. The predominance of LDC is exemplified by the variety of people who she indicated engage in it: couples, single-young people, both men and women in domestic partnerships and with children (either partner working in camp, for example the male partner stays home while his female partner works in camp or vice versa):

> Yeah, there are quite a few of them that work in camp. Sometimes it's just couples and sometimes they, a lot of them don't have kids either…I know, the ones, like friends that I have, some are single and some, one the husband works and the girlfriend goes to camp (Participant 5).

Camp provides the opportunity to earn an income in a community with limited industry and high unemployment. She described the shift from single industry, forestry based employment in the community to an LDC employment context:

> Yeah, it, it is very different because I know, I remember, when I was little my dad always worked, I think he started off in the mill… And now a lot of people, a lot of the younger ones that are out of high school and stuff have moved to working in camp. A lot of them are out of town or, you, or sometimes you never see people anymore so…It's very different but it can be kind of good for them because they get to go do stuff most kids out of high school don't get to do…Yeah, there's little more opportunities and for some, like, sometimes they, it depends, cause some people don't get to do, do a whole lot or else they're just always working [minimum wage jobs]…Mainly, sometimes they're home or they're, they're doing stuff at home, they don't get to go out or somewhere, just paying off all their, their bills and debts and stuff (Participant 5).

Camp work is normalized for her as she indicates that the benefits over-ride any challenges. It is seen as acceptable and beneficial not only to her family but also to a community with long-standing high unemployment. There is almost no other choice in the community for similarly paid working class labour. Furthermore, most challenges in the community, such as not seeing people anymore as they are always in camp, were viewed as outside her experiences and not necessarily relevant to her.

Participants in the study normalized camp life. They understood it as an external, unchanging force. Camp was understood as a resource extraction labour organization standard,

which meets the needs of the sector. It is beneficial to and connected to their sense of identity as it is a predominant form of employment in the region, within their communities, and in some cases multiple generations of their families have worked in camp. Normalization of camp work was supported by an understanding that alternative, high paying working class employment is limited in the region. It is connected with their sense of stability and a sense of self.

Camp culture. A majority of the participants described either observing or personally experiencing the impacts of camp culture. The negative aspects of camp culture were variably described as hyper-masculine or male dominated; contributing to domestic relationship problems, such as jealousy; irresponsibility with finances; and partying. The positive aspects of camp culture relate to a sense of community and belonging as well as opportunities to learn about new professions for their partners. Most of the women strove to distance themselves from the negative aspects of camp culture. They achieved this by isolating it as external to themselves: it is other people's problems. They also mitigated its impact through a process of reducing cognitive dissonance by rationalizing and accepting it, positive thinking, and avoidance.

Participant 2 distanced herself from negative aspects of camp culture relating to relationship concerns, such as jealousy. She related it to both relationship challenges and northern BC working class culture. Although she indicated the experience of relationship strain and jealousy in camp is not necessarily sourced from the camp context but rather is exacerbated by it. She demonstrated further distancing from working class culture as she delineated differences between professional, white collar, and working class cultures. She described a process of attempted acculturation into camp culture as it related to her relationship with her husband. She experienced this in her relationship and through the actions of co-workers, which she actively rejected:

> I think it's, ugh, I, part of it's cultural I think. Cause [my hubby] told me that when we first started dating that he'd like, he'd never come across anyone who had had like that, who made it make sense like that, right. [Laughter]. Cause he said his exes were always, like, super jealous and you know, he would be jealous of them, and, er, and he said he'd never, like, come across anyone who just wasn't jealous. And I'm like,…I don't know what to say about that, but like, I see it a lot up north now and, I've heard it too from, like, field assistants and stuff. I heard one girl tell me that, you know, 'You gotta make your man jealous so that you know he loves you' or something' and I'm like [Laughter] 'What?! [Laughter]'. 'You've gotta flirt with other guys so that you can see if your man will go fight for you' and I'm like 'No, I don't really want anyone fighting over me thank you... [Laughter]. I would rather we just didn't fight. [Laughter]'(Participant 2).

She was also able to successfully guide her husband to gain insight into this unhealthy aspect of camp culture. She believed this contributed to the health and longevity of their relationship. She indicated other couples would enjoy a strengthened relationship through counseling support in this regard. She described a strong and resilient self, which is divergent from the northern, working class cultural norm, which supports her to maintain the lifestyle:

> Well maybe not useful for me but I could see like, and I have no idea what the counselling situation is like here, but like, marriage counselling and stuff like that, like helping people to get over all the things that I talked about before, like the jealousy and the, you know, like the discomfort of being apart from your partner and trusting them [Laughter] (Participant 2).

Aspects of working class camp culture were tied to the labourers as being somewhat unsophisticated and undesirable for single, educated women; needing support to manage their finances; and engaged in higher risk behaviours, such as drinking alcohol. Camp culture, and in particular the camp lifestyle outside of a family context, were seen as unstable:

> And they're [drillers] in camp for 6 weeks or 8 weeks at a time and then get out, they blow all their money on big trucks and fast car, well not fast cars, but big trucks, snowmobiles, and booze. And then, and then they go back to camp. [Laughter] (Participant 2).

She externalized camp culture by separating it from her identity; it is not part of her culture as a professional, educated woman originally from southern BC. She further sought to distinguish

herself as she described working class employment in contrast to the relative stability of a white collar profession:

> And there are a lot of people out there who are looking for work….Ugh, well a lot more labourers than professionals but, I don't know, yeah like I work for a big enough company that we have, or, we have our thumbs in a lot of different pies right. so, um, it doesn't affect me as much….I mean the boom bust cycle of industry has a huge impact on camp workers…you know, they've been making so much money, they've been making a $100,000 a year to drive a stupid truck up and down a pit and all of a sudden that's gone and they've got mortgages and trucks and snowmobiles and all this stuff that they need to pay for and no jobs to pay for it (Participant 2).

This frustration presented in her separation of self from working class culture, which may be linked to years of working in the field and also struggling to support her husband to have the same stability and opportunity as herself through in-community employment.

Similarly to Participant 2, Participant 5 also found that the LDC cultural challenges were not relevant to her personal experiences. She described camp culture as resulting in camp workers drinking too much on furlough and other couples' lacking trust in their relationships, however, camp culture is not detrimental to her family: She described others having challenges:

> For the ones that, that are responsible. [Laughter]… Well, like the ones that will do stuff on their own and the other ones they just drink when they get out…Yeah, so, they usually just spend all their money on drinks and that's about it (Participant 5).

As a result of a trusting and strong relationship the negative aspects associated with camp culture do not impact them:

> We're always very trusting. Like, I know a lot of people in camp they're, it's a little hard for people, but…Yeah. I know a lot of people been crazy like that but, ours hasn't been too bad (Participant 5).

In contrast, Participant 6 identified relationship problems as problematic in terms of camp culture, but they have had a more direct impact on her. In particular, she described issues such as partying, cheating, and gossip. Furthermore, she also articulated that these concerns, although

not directly tied to camp work, are exacerbated by it as she described them within the context of camp work. She related this to the high number of people from her community working in the same camp; the camp culture concerns bleed out into the community and vice-a-versa. The camp culture impacts she faced related to relationship concerns, particularly gossip in camp:

> I just thinks, you, you know, they're working. You know, they're not going up there to party and find a new partner and it's just work. And as long as it's just work then there shouldn't be a problem….I know because it's a small town and everybody knows everybody's business that it's not like that for everyone (Participant 6).

Participant 6 found camp culture could be overwhelming and highly problematic. She coped with it by ignoring rumors and gossip and asserting her confidence in her partner and their relationship. Her concerns were tied more closely to problematic others who work in or whose partners work in camp:

> I mean, small town crap, always small town crap and, you know, for some reason there's a lot of, there's a lot women in camp, even the men that go to camp, you know, rumors start about cheating, and, whatever, and it's just like, that can drive you crazy…And there's been several people trying, you know, attempting 'Oh he's doing this with her and he's doing that' and it's just like, 'I don't care. I don't care what you're saying. It doesn't bother me, I don't care'. And, you know, I trust him and there's a lot of women around here that don't trust theirs (Participant 6).

Her resilience also was found in her assertion that this negative aspect of camp culture is associated with others. She gained a sense of confidence in knowing that she can trust her husband. She intentionally strove to develop this sense of trust in the relationship. She rejected this culture for self-preservation as she indicated doing otherwise could "drive you crazy".

Participant 3 experienced camp culture as personally and directly impacting her. However, she did not identify negative aspects of camp culture as they related to the wider community. Participant 3 was initially apprehensive regarding its negative aspects:

> And I was a little bit concerned about the influence some of the other camp guys might have on [my hubby] while he's away. Cause he's a, he can be influenced, you know, if he likes someone and he respects them then he can be influenced to, you know, go along with whatever they're doing. And, and so I was concerned that he might, you know, participate in activities that I didn't approve of. [Laughter]. You know, just like the nightlife and things, right (Participant 3).

Prior to entering the camp lifestyle, this couple had always been together and thus she was able to support, guide, and be involved in her husband's choices. She further described a period of adjustment as the negative impacts of camp culture bled into their relationship from camp:

> Um, he definitely hears a lot, um, and which I've asked him to never repeat to me [Laughter]. Because they're, they are a lot of, um, I guess I want to say hard personalities, at camp too. Where they think really inappropriate jokes are super funny...Um, so the, the he hears a lot that he doesn't necessarily like that makes him uncomfortable…Yeah, like racial jokes or like, it, it could be anything. But at first I think he was trying to vent to me or like let it out and I had to let him know that I, like I can't be his outlet for that because I don't want to hear it either [Laughter] (Participant 3).

Camp culture also entered into the women's personal lives as they worked towards creating boundaries between the husband's camp community and home life. For participant 4, she struggled with needing her husband to shed camp life and re-engage with her and the baby. This would manifest itself with him setting clear boundaries with his friends, "I get very annoyed when his friends phone him from camp that he was just in camp with" (Participant 4). Participant 3 also had to set boundaries with her husband between his camp life and home life. In particular, she prevented him from sharing the negative aspects of camp life, which supported her to maintain the lifestyle. However, she recognized her husband's need to be supported and encouraged him to seek this out from his peer group in camp:

> I think it's [hubby's support group in camp] the other guys, the other dudes, the other dad dudes. I think that's also why they're so bonded is because I had to like shift some of that responsibility, like I can't take that. I don't want to hear that (Participant 3).

Although she realized others easily influence her husband she created a sense of distinctness between him, and in turn herself, with the negative aspects of camp culture by assigning her husband to the positive group of male workers in camp. She also recognized that her husband needed time, like a buffer zone, to shed camp culture after his time away. She indicated he would previously "bark orders" at her similarly to how he would with male co-workers during his furlough. As such, she asserted her need for her husband to shed camp culture:

> Like, I think he just walked around always thinking like 'I'm [Participant 3's Hubby]'. But he, he needs to be work [hubby] and home life [hubby] and so that took a really long time, but I think he sees that now and he will give himself some extra time if he needs to. If he is working farther away, like at [this mining camp], it really started then he would take the extra like half a day and stay a night somewhere and decompress and then come home. [Laughter]….[and] I, I feel like I helped coach and guide [that] (Participant 3).

She requested he remain away from home for 24 hours before returning from camp. She identified this as positively impacting her family in terms of her husband's presentation as more settled and prepared for re-entry in to the family:

> [My hubby] taking the decompressing time that he needs to. Um, before coming home and making sure that, like when comes home, he's coming home happy. And ready. [Laughter]. He's pretty good at that. Every now and again though, I just want to get home, like I'm done with this and then he comes home and he's still kinda snarly. Um, and tha-, and that's when it takes a go-, good couple days for him to chill out….[H]e usually stays there like for, like everybody flies out as quickly as they can basically when it, they're on turn around. So he will, instead of flying out at 12:00 noon or whatever he'll just stay the night there, figure stuff out, take his time packing up, and then come the next morning first thing. [T]hat's a great transition (Participant 3).

The family was able to succeed in LDC, in part, through her insight into their needs for reintegration to home from camp. She held a sense of pride in her ability to problem-solve and support her family as she saw the strategy's success.

Camp culture also provided benefits to the participants and their husbands. It provided participants' husbands the opportunity to gain a sense of belonging and community in camp. This is aided by the concentrated amount of time the men have together, being close to others in similar professions, and connection with community members and friends from their home communities. The camp context provided their partners with a sense of a pseudo-family and community outside of home life and an opportunity to network with other workers:

> That is like, they're kind of like a family, almost. Like, they're stuck up there doing the same thing all the time so they kinda develop a, you know, ugh, sort of a family dynamic but like just like close friends kinda thing. Cause, you know, they can talk about what they're doing and they have live, in these houses or wherever they live. I don't know what he's living in, but. But yeah, yeah he definitely has friendships with people and then, just, it's, you know, his world, kinda thing. That's his, his life, outside of us kinda thing (Participant 6).

The women are comforted knowing that their partners are socially integrated and thus supported while in camp. This reduced their pressure to be personally responsible for their husbands' psychosocial well-being:

Five of the six participants observed or personally experienced the impacts of camp culture. The women indicated negative aspects of camp culture. These concerns were grounded in hyper-masculine environment; domestic relationship problems, such as jealousy; irresponsibility with finances; and partying. While the positive aspects of camp culture related to their partners' gaining a sense of community and belonging as well as opportunities to learn about new professions. The women coped with the negative aspects of camp culture by distancing themselves from it, which they achieved by isolating it as external to themselves. The negative aspects of camp culture are more closely tied to other people's characteristics and/or problems. Women also mitigated the impact of the negative aspects of camp culture through a

process of reducing cognitive dissonance. They rationalized and accepted it while also engaging in positive thinking.

The future in LDC. The maintenance of the LDC lifestyle for these women considers the challenges and benefits they see to camp work. Women's adaptive processes, such as positive thinking and normalization of the lifestyle, also contribute to their resilience in and maintenance of the lifestyle. A strong relationship with their husbands was seen as necessary to maintain LDC. In terms of challenges, women described concerns with communication infrastructure, the boom and bust nature of resource extraction, and personal-political conflicts with the environmental impact and First Nations land rights' implications associated with resource extraction. Most women indicated that the benefits outweighed the costs of LDC, which were tied to a lack of alternative employment in the region. Women also discussed the considerations regarding their future in LDC.

A common challenge associated with LDC for the women included camp communication infrastructure. Although some camps had suitable communication infrastructure, the women indicated that often varies according to the camp size:

> Like, if he's in camp, all the bigger camps they've got internet so even if we couldn't talk on the phone we'd be messaging back and forth or he'd give me a call at whatever time, it really didn't matter… The new camps, when they're just, just starting out the new ones that they haven't put in phone lines 'Oh, they've just started the camp. And, phone lines gonna be put in, in a week or two'…[E]xactly, [the satellite phone] is expensive (Participant 1).

Although some women indicated that poor communication infrastructure was associated primarily with new, mining exploration camps others also indicated established camps did not offer adequate and sufficient phone and Internet access:

> [T]here's so many people up there that need to talk to their families. So, ugh, I don't blame him for not doing that. I, ugh, I don't like it but I'm not mad at him about it. I feel like it's kind of a rip off on their end that they're not making it

> more accessible for him...Like, our smartphones, they have Wi-Fi up there so we can text but when he's out working he's obviously not texting. So, you know, the couple hours that he is in camp he can text, but, sometimes they don't go through and we can't Facetime so my kid can't really, my kid can't text, so she can talk to him at all. She can't hear him or see him. So for me, I would, I would hope that, you know, eventually they'll make the internet good enough or get more phones or something so that the child can talk to him (Participant 6).

Camp communication infrastructure is vital to sustain the husband and wife relationship:

> Yeah we talk every day….I-, it's [communication] a huge role. Um, one of the reasons we're married is because we're able to communicate so well and like and I don't think either of us had ever had that in a partner before so, um, yeah we just talk. We talk about everything (Participant 2).

Being able to communicate with their partners was particularly important to the women as they sought to facilitate connection with the children and their father. Participant 6 indicated this concern was particularly problematic for her family. She stated she could manage not talking to her husband for a number of days, but it was intolerable to her that her daughter could not have more frequent contact with her father while he's in camp:

> [W]e've tried and it's (Facetime, Skype) just terrible. Like, it doesn't work. So that's, that's the only thing that I don't like about camp is that we can't see him or talk to him or anything…For me, I can like whatever, you know, I'll see him in two weeks. But for [the baby], [the baby's] daddy's gone for two weeks so [the baby] needs to be able to talk to him (Participant 6).

Another challenge described by some of the women surrounded the precariousness of the boom and bust nature of the resource extraction sector. They understood that employment in camp is not stable and cannot be counted on:

> Well, I do know that there's like, I mean the boom bust cycle of industry has a huge impact on camp workers, right? Cause they'll be flying high for so long and this is especially true of oil patch workers, like, recently right. And there are a lot of people out there who are looking for work, ugh, well a lot more labourers than professionals but, …if [the mine] were to shut down tomorrow like that would be huge and we'd have to sell some stuff [Laughter] (Participant 2).

The women indicated having their own stable, higher paying employment and financial planning skills were important to weather the boom-bust storm.

Working in mining or mining exploration camps in northern BC proved to be a challenge for some women who identified as First Nations or whose partner is First Nations. Concerns centred on the cultural and land use implications of mining activities:

> [T]here've been a lot of issues around that mine in particular and they've been blockaded a lot and there are members of [my hubby's] family who blockaded the access to the mine. And who are really, really opposed to it being there. And, you know, and [my hubby] himself is kind of, conflicted about it too because, you know, that's his territory. That's, you know, that's where his, his ancestors are from and that's a really important part of his territory so, but at the same time he needs to make a living. You know, so, and that was one of the few opportunities to do it around here… Like, when we go to [his home community] or whatever and we visit his grandparents, like, everyone knows he works at [the mine], everyone knows he needs to provide for his family, but yeah it's just not talked about (Participant 2).

The women's concerns also centred on environmental responsibility in resource extraction. They further articulated the importance of industry ethics and the responsibility of government oversight:

> I think there've been a lot of wrongs perpetuated, and I think, I think that ugh, there are, there are ethical companies and there are less ethical companies…And then it's the government's job to hold them to account and to, and to assess what… [has been] done and say 'Yes, this is good enough' or 'No, it's not good enough'. Um, or 'No you haven't consulted enough with the First Nations' or whatever and then to follow up on it and say, you know, things that happen that happen at Mount Polly, like the government wasn't, was issuing warnings about their tailings dam but they weren't following up on it and then the tailings dam fails, right? And, that's a hu-, that's a huge thing. I can just imagine, like, I felt sick to my stomach when that happened (Participant 2).

Women reconciled the personal and political aspects of their husbands' work by recognizing a need for work. However they also recognized the importance of government oversight and First Nations consultation and approval of mining activity.

Many indicated engaging in adaptive strategies, such as having strong organization skills, adhering to a schedule, and drawing on social supports to ameliorate these struggles with camp. Women also developed coping skills, such as positive thinking and reducing cognitive dissonance associated with LDC in order to normalize it for themselves and the children. These pieces are further discussed in the theme: adaptation. However, women shared the importance of a strong relationship to sustain the camp lifestyle. A strong relationship was characterized by good communication; confidence, trust, and no jealousy; and gaining appraisal from their partners for their hard work and proficiency in managing the household:

> It's just like, that can drive you crazy, you know being at home and thinking, it's, you know 'Is, you know, is my, is my man doing another woman in camp?' Like you could just go crazy and I can understand, I can app-, I can, not maybe appreciate it but I can understand why they would feel crazy about that because they can't control it, they can't catch them, they can't do anything about it. So for me, being comfortable with him being gone and knowing, you know, he's going to be around women I don't know, he's going to be working with women that I don't know, so I'm comfortable with him and my relationship so, I don't, it doesn't matter…And there's been several people trying, you know, attempting 'Oh he's doing this with her and he's doing that' and it's just like, 'I don't care. I don't care what you're saying. It doesn't bother me, I don't care' (Participant 6).

> Um, and then over time [my hubby] has really come around to, like now he'll just outright say that I've done a good job. [Laughter]. And so he just, I, I f-, I feel like and I also think that he's ok with it, um, at, cause he's with them right now and he gets to just jump in and have kids that use their manners and they listen to him most of the time (Participant 3).

Women understood that camp work is not ideal for the families as their partners are away from them and the children. Some women described ongoing feelings of loneliness and loss with their husbands away. Women expressed concern about their husbands' connection to their children. In particular, Participant 4 described sadness with her husband missing important family functions and special occasions with his child, such as father's day, "[H]e misses out on so much, like activities. He's gonna miss out on Father's Day, again and my birthday, again"

(Participant 4). The benefits and lack of alternative choices for employment outweighed the deficits. The primary benefit of LDC was an increased family income and an associated improvement in lifestyle:

> It's hard, [Crying sound] like, the first couple times that he comes home, it's like I can't let him go again. But we can't pay our bills without him [Crying sound]… Like my brother works his butt off in town and doesn't make nearly as much as my husband does. And, it's like, he probably works just as hard. Um, so I'm not sure. It would be nice if there was something like that in town. I think it's a good way to pay your bills and live comfortably (Participant 4).

Women indicated being able to engage in their own careers more, participate in sports and recreation, and buy new items as benefiting the family:

> Like, the positives for the kids are literally the financial st-, security…You know, and for the kids too, I mean, it's, we want to be able to give them a certain lifestyle and, and we need him to be working so that we can do that, right…You know and the fact that, you know, as they get older we'll be able to afford to like, put them in hockey. [Laughter] (Participant 2).

Women also indicated their husbands benefit from LDC. One participant stated her husband increased responsibility for himself and the family since he started working in LDC. Others described the importance of their husband benefiting from LDC with increased confidence and accomplishment in practicing a trade and earning a higher income:

> And now that, and now that he works in camp and he makes his own money and, you know we make about the same now, and, now it's like, buy a truck [Laughter] and put nice tires on the truck [Laughter]. And you know, and ugh, he really enjoys having that independence I think, for sure. And, ugh, and it's good for him to be working (Participant 2).

> I think it actually got better because I think he was in like a bad spiral when we first met and everything so now he's more responsible with [our daughter] and everyone (Participant 5).

Women also found the extended time at furlough supported concentrated time for the fathers with their children:

> [T]he two and two schedule, like some of the positives are just that, you know,

> when he's home for two weeks we can actually do things. Like, I get four weeks of vacation every year and so we can, you know, I can just take time off of my job and we can go so-, somewhere for like two weeks and not worry about him taking vacation, right so. That's, yeah, that's a big positive" (Participant 2).

Women in the study presented as going through a process of engaging in a cost-benefit analysis of LDC. However, despite certain challenges and sacrifice associated with LDC, women expressed the importance of the benefits to the lifestyles.

When imagining a future in LDC, most of the women accepted that they would be in it for the long term. They discussed personal and familial strength and having moved through adaptive processes as helping them to sustain the lifestyle:

> I think so, until, I mean, we're always on the lookout for, for good jobs that come up in town. But at the same time, like, if [the mine] turns into a 30 year mine, like, that's [my hubby's] career right there. And that's a lot of stability, you know, and being…where he's at right now, there are opportunities for him to advance in there, there are opportunities to get apprenticeships and maybe develop a trade as a millwright or something. So I think it's really good for him in the long run, you know, for us as a family, and there's gonna be challenges, but I think str-, we're strong enough to be able to hack it, like (Participant 2).

When thinking about the future, Participant 1 stated she hopes her husband will work less in camp than he does at present. However, she accepted the need for him to work in camp as inevitable considering his profession and industry:

> And I could see it being something that realistically probably over 10 years it's a transition to being more in the [shop]. But that's also gonna be with how, if he stays with the current company, if he moves companies, that's really going to influence it. [H]e will transition out of doing as much field work, but the nature of the business that he's in he's always going to do some. Even if it's just that he does all [shop] work and arranges the maintenance and overseas a couple guys and they go out in the field (Participant 1).

Some of the women expressed concern with managing in the LDC lifestyle if they have more children, which they stated could be a deciding factor on whether to continue in it or not:

> [I]f I were to have more children I don't know that I would want him in camp still…Sometimes I find it being tough having one…Yeah. I don't know if I would want him to be gone that long if I had more (Participant 4).

> But, like, we want more kids but at the same time I'm not 100% sure I can do it by myself when he's not home. Like, because it's just one, it's me and [the child] that's fine, I have two hands, you know, I can take care of myself and [the child] at the same time, but I don't know that I could do it by myself half of the time with two kids, or three kids. You know, like I'm not confident enough to say 'Yeah, let's do this. I'm ok with you being gone' so, I don't know. Like right now I'm good when he's gone. I can handle it. I'm not overwhelmed. I'm not like I'm going to pull my hair out, 'I can't do this'. But I'm not sure if we progress and have more kids that I will be able to say that I'm ok…So, I'm not sure camp work is ideal for big families. I think it can get really stressful. Yeah, even with a support system I think without your spouse it's hard. That's just, that's just my perception (Participant 6).

Participant 6 was uncertain about a future in LDC. She articulated the value of the work to her family, however, engaged in conversation with her partner to discuss possible future employment alternatives supported by increased education for both of them, "But, um, the way that we're talking about it, it's not really a forever job" (Participant 6). Despite her confidence in her parenting and ability to gain support from family members to care for her child, she indicated a need for child caring support from her partner if they had more children. Even with the support offered by the grandmothers she had doubts about engaging in parenting alone with more children. This suggested a wish for her partner to more actively engaged in co-parenting should the family grow; a current need that would be further required in a future with more children. For women in this study, a future in LDC centred on maintaining the stability in the family and managing the family's well-being and connectedness. This related to the women's role as the caretaker and nucleus of the family, supporting and guiding the family members' well-being.

The women considered a future in LDC by engaging in a process of balancing its challenges and benefits. Challenges in LDC relate to adequate and reliable communication infrastructure in camp, the boom and bust nature of resource extraction, and environment and

First Nations' land rights' implications associated with resource extraction. Women described being able to maintain the LDC lifestyle through certain adaptive processes, which also built their resilience in LDC: positive thinking and normalization of the lifestyle. In addition, the women also indicated that a strong relationship with one's husband was seen as necessary to maintain LDC. In sum, most women indicated that the benefits of LDC outweighed the costs. However, this was tied to the lack of alternative employment in the region.

The camp lifestyle was experienced over time as an external force that shapes their life choices and decisions. As an external force, the women held a sense of LDC being outside of their external locus of control. As such, they sought to build stability in this context by normalizing and adapting to LDC. Half of the women in the study had experiences migrating for their husbands' work. In particular, they achieved this through their intentional choice to live in a community close to the work site where their partners were employed. Women normalized LDC. Women further accepted LDC as they understood there were no other immediate or readily available employment choices in-community for their husbands. LDC was accepted as a resource extraction workforce organization norm in the region. Furthermore, some women normalized LDC as they were embedded in the lifestyle over multiple generations. Most of the participants described observing or experiencing the impact of camp culture, overwhelmingly camp culture was described as negative in terms of substance use as well as gossip and relationship challenges. However, positive aspects related to their partners having an opportunity to build a sense of community, gain new skills, and learn about new professions while in camp. The women stated there challenges exist with the lifestyle. However, women overcame them through the use of adaptive strategies. Furthermore, they identified the benefits

of LDC as outweighing any problematic aspects of the lifestyle. In consideration of the future, the women overwhelmingly accepted continuation of the LDC lifestyle.

Camp Schedule

Rotation schedules varied for the husbands with some working three to four weeks in camp with a one-week furlough and others working two weeks in and one week out. Two of the men had seasonal work with one husband having the winter months off and another also having winter out of camp, but he spent most of it working in the company shop. Women in the study had differing routines depending upon whether or not their partner was in or out of camp. Some women indicated feeling a sense of burden in independently managing the workload of a family and household. While others enjoyed having control and autonomy over the household when their husband was away; they were often supported by formal services or their social network to manage alone. The women employed strategies to manage the household alone while their partners were away. Women also described an adjustment period at their husband's return from camp. The husband's return home was met with excitement, anticipation, and also challenges and frustration in re-integrating him into the routine. The women often planned for their husbands' return and adapted the routine to support him and his connection to the children. Having the husband home was an opportunity for some women to gain a sense of freedom to access their social network or to work more in paid employment. Over time, many women developed a strong sense of having separate life worlds to their husbands with camp being described as "his life separate from us" (Participant 6). While some women faced strong emotional responses to their husband's return back to camp, as they anticipated feeling lonely, others indicated feeling a sense of relief at their husband's departure and a return to a sense of normalcy.

In camp. When the women's husbands were in camp they shared the experience of increased workload, responsibility, and at times a hurried, packed schedule. For some of the women, life revolved around balancing a career, volunteerism, and time with their child[ren]:

> Um, get the [children] up, change diapers, get dressed, breakfast. Usually, like, throw them in their seats, cut up some fruit and some cheerios and maybe a piece of toast, and the, while they're eating that I go and get myself ready and dressed and contacts and everything, run back out, shovel something in my mouth maybe I drink a cup of coffee, if I remember it, and then everybody gets in the truck, goes to day care, I go to work, work all day, I get off work at 3:30pm now, which is fantastic…I just work till 3:30pm every day. Pick the boys up, usually come straight home, sometimes I go to the grocery store, but usually straight home and then we play for a little bit, I try and make dinner, but [this baby] is really clingy and so sometimes that doesn't work. [Laughter]. And, eat dinner, bed time routine, talk to Dad, go to bed, drink a glass of wine. Go to bed. [Laughter]. Do it all again the next day (Participant 2).

The repetitiveness of the schedule can be experienced as unchanging and monotonous; however, it was also understood as necessary and vital to managing all of their daily demands. As career women, access to child care facilitated their return to work and was highly valued and contributed to a sense of decreased burden, "You know, but, yeah, with them in daycare, I find it a lot easier, and, so I, so it's never as hard as I think it's gonna be" (Participant 2). Here Participant 2 sought to reduce the notion that LDC is problematic with children and that any challenges were constructed by her thoughts and thus she must work to reduce their impact.

At the forefront of the women's minds were the attachment needs of their children; it was vital they were connected to at least one parent. As such, there was somewhat of a sense of tenuousness as they balanced career, child-raising, and managing a household alone. While for others, particularly stay-at-home mothers and the women on maternity leave, their daily life surrounded spending time with family, other mothers, attending mother support services, and doing activities with their child:

> Um, just to get adjusted to it. But, regardless, regardless of whether she went to daycare or not it was, like, get up in the morning, vacuum everything, make sure cats have food, make sure the water's clean, make that there's food made. [My baby], one of her favourite things to eat is pancakes. And only a specific type of pancakes, because heaven forbid you use a different type of recipe. So it's making her specific type of pancakes and, like trying to make sure that there's enough, like enough food that she likes to eat (Participant 1).

Meeting their children's needs included daily, hands on responsibility for their activities of daily living, socialization, free time/recreation (library, park, swimming, meeting other moms and babies), and communication with the father in the evenings. They grew highly attuned to their children. Knowing in great detail the needs of her child provided a sense of pride and accomplishment to Participant 1.

A simple routine and access to a social network were highly valued to support parenting alone and to stave off loneliness. One participant adapted her routine to stay close to home and family so as to reduce her workload and challenges associated with parenting alone. She would organize tasks to complete, such as large grocery shopping trips, hair appointments, for his return:

> [I]f we have appointments or something it takes twice as long to get out the door to go anywhere because I don't have his support there to get [the baby] dressed and ready, um, sometimes we have to take the car seat and put it in my mom's car and then it won't [inaudible] the car when I need it. So then we gotta deal with that. And paying bills, um, yeah, if the, um, if I have an appointment, like I have a dentist appointment coming up, I have to find a sitter to look after [the baby], and then I have to drop [the baby] off at the sitter after we just rushed around getting ready, and then I still have to make it to my appointment. And finding a sitter is a chore in itself, because everybody I know works. I, like, I don't really know anyone who actually has the time to just baby-sit. [Laughter]….So we definitely make a point of getting those things done while he's here for the help. Oh my goodness, I take for granted, like what he does all the time. [Laughter] (Participant 4).

Completing daily tasks was arduous and tedious without her husband's support. Parenting was experienced as a mutual, shared experience in her family. Limited access to informal and formal

childcare contributed to a sense of burden regarding task completion outside the home. Although infrequently accessed, informal childcare has proven invaluable when needed for appointments. The women engaged in strategies such as being organized, following a strict routine, learning to do tasks their husbands would typically complete, and accessing formal child care or social supports to manage while their partner was away. Despite articulating some challenges with managing the household and baby alone, the women did not describe this experience as insurmountable; they characterized themselves as adapted and able to manage, particularly as they gained more experience as mothers.

Women experienced their husbands' time in camp as increasing their workload and responsibility in the household and with the children. A majority of the women balanced career, volunteerism, and childcare demands. The women managed their daily life through maintenance of a simple routine, accessing child care through formal or informal supports, and visiting with other women or family to stave off loneliness. Women were highly attuned to their children's needs, in particular the children's attachment needs. For some women, especially those who described their time on maternity leave, the daily routine was experienced as repetitious and monotonous. A return to work was highly valued for many of the women and child care facilitated this opportunity. An adequate access to childcare was problematic for all of the women in this context.

Furlough. Women variously described their husband's furlough period as involving their husband going through a transition period, providing support to the husband to transition, integrating the husband into their schedules, and gaining valuable family time together. For some women they obtained easier access to employment through their husband's child caring while

others had to make a shift in focus from their social world, such as other mothers and family, to their husband.

The women's husbands went through a transition at their return home from camp. Although some indicated their husbands were relieved and happy to return home they also described them as tired, isolative, and moody, at times:

> Very tired. Like, when he comes home, he's kinda grumpy, but I don't think he's grumpy cause he doesn't, he didn't miss us or anything. I think he's grumpy because he has to come out of it…Like, he's was just so, 'Ok this is what I'm doing' for two weeks and then now [he's like], 'Ok, well what am I doing?' (Participant 6).

> And then, ugh, and the, the other part of it too is that sometimes like I just full out need to tell him that, like I need for him to be mindful about the way that he talks to me because I want this to be a really good turnaround time. And I, and, and it is because I think that, like he's used to working where they just kind of like bark orders at each other….Like, 'Go get that tray' and I'm like 'You need to not say that to me". [Laughter] (Participant 3).

Most of the women supported their husbands to re-adjust to home life by giving them space to catch up on sleep, have some time alone, and re-learn the family culture so as to reduce conflict. Some women indicated there being value in their partner having a buffer zone prior to re-entry into the family:

> [A] transition night before he leaves, that maybe that would make things a little bit easier. Um, and maybe just having a little bit more, ugh, I don't know, I'm going to have to figure out some kind of structure that works a little bit better for us because right now it's so frustrating. Or maybe I have to deal with just how I feel about it. But, there's so much frustration around it for me that it's like, there needs to be something that's kind of book ending this experience (Participant 1).

In particular, Participant 1 saw this transition period as problematic. It was important for Participant 6 to understand and rationalize her husband's presentation during his transition to home life and to feel comfortable with the relationship and that he missed his family. Participant

2 had frustration with needing more immediate support from her husband at his return home; she looked forward to being able to share the parenting duties with him:

> I get a sense from him that it's like a huge relief to be home… It's great [when he comes home][Laughter]. Usually. Cause, ugh, if he's on night shift then he usually spends a day or more sleeping. [Laughter]. Like, you know, which it can be frustrating sometimes cause, like, you know, I'll want his help and like I'll be so excited that he's home and that you know get at 7:00 in the morning and then 'Yeah, yeah, yeah I have help!' and then he sleeps until like 9:00am or something and then I'm like 'Gghh' [Laughter]. I wanted your help when you came home'. [Laughter] (Participant 2).

However, she rationalized his sleeping in as relating to his transition from night shift to a normal schedule at home. Participant 4 struggled to understand her husband's transition back home from camp and at times it was problematic and confusing for her

> And then there's me, who's usually stuck at home, not in the house, but around my area with my daughter or whatever, because I don't want to, like, keep getting her in and out of the car and, um, and I wanna go like, [Laughter], like go do things. And he's just not up for it, and the first day is like awkward (Participant 4).

For some of the women, incorporating their husbands back into family life at furlough required some negotiation around differing parenting styles, routine, and role negotiation in terms of control over the household:

> And going back to co-parenting is where a lot of the, we butt heads. Yeah, yeah, because he wants to fit himself back in…Um, and, and he usually lets me takes the lead parenting role but sometimes when he comes in and figures he can, you know change things up, or this routine isn't working and, [sigh], I don't necessarily wanna to give in to the outside perspective coming in to see cause I'm doing what I think is working (Participant 3).

Although Participant 3 asserted her role as lead parent, she indicated negotiating this with her husband as she described seeking out his permission to maintain this role.

Many of the women asserted maintenance of their routine and approach to parenting and household management with their husbands. They valued the effort, sense of self-efficacy, and

accomplishment they gained in implementing a schedule and independently organizing and managing daily life with their children. The husbands' return brought some initial disruption to their routines. They also valued adherence to their schedule by their husbands, which indicated to them acknowledgment of a job well done from them for their efforts. This was particularly important to women whose husbands have short furloughs of one week after extended periods away. Some women experienced their time at home while their partner was in camp as arduous; it required hard work and a certain amount of sacrifice on their part. In turn, they appreciated opportunities for their husbands to experience their struggle home alone. These women needed their husbands to empathize with them by "walking in their shoes"; empathy was highly valuable to offset a sense sacrifice and hard work alone:

> I think there are times when he doesn't really get me. You know, because he doesn't have the, the day-to-day struggle although now, like, now when he comes home and he's alone with the boys, there are definitely some days when he's like [frustration noise]. [Laughter]. And, I'm like "Now you get it!" Welcome to my world. [Laughter]. When he's telling me about how [the baby] doesn't want to be put down all day and [the other baby] was screaming and "Nuh-na-nih-na-nuh", and I'm like, yeah, yep. Been there, done that. [Laughter] (Participant 2).

Participant 6 highly valued her husband's camp work, which required long hours and hard work. This was somewhat of a personal sacrifice for the family. As such, she described furlough as "his time" thus placing primacy on his needs and adjusting the family's schedule to ensure he enjoys his time out of camp. She also accepted a more flexible schedule with his return as she is able to relinquish some responsibility for managing daily life:

> And then when he comes home it's a little less controlled because it's his time off so we'll wake up in the morning, him and I have a discussion about what's going to happen, and then we have to be like, 'Ok, this is what's going on' and then it's faster. Like we're just, we're getting up and we're going or whatever. So, when it's her and I, I kinda know what to expect and I can talk to her about that. But when he's home he wants to do this, he wants to do that, so it's a little less [planned]. It's kind of like, just get up and go and do stuff cause it's his time off (Participant 6).

Her partner's return home provided her a sense of relief and space to work. She greatly valued accessing employment as evidenced by her description of it as a "luxury":

> [I]t's like, 'Well [my hubby's] home. I can go'. It's a little easier, I can just kind of get up and go. Um, so, that's nicer. That I don't have to worry about childcare. But that's only half the month, right. Half the month I have the luxury, half the month I don't (Participant 6).

Having a freer schedule and access to employment and post-secondary was shared by other women as well:

> No, he has, he stayed home all winter until I was done school. I just finished my [course] so he's just leaving now for the first time this season. Yeah, he stays home to take care of our [child] (Participant 4).

> [H]e usually wakes up with [our child] and gets all her stuff ready while I get ready for work…So and I have to wake up extra early to get her ready…And, some, sometimes it's a little harder to wake up early. [Laughter] (Participant 5).

The husband's return from camp is anticipated and is an important opportunity for the children to reconnect with their father. Many of the women focused more on the value of the furlough period for their children vis-à-vis themselves:

> I like when he comes home for me cause I miss him, obviously. But I like when he comes home for our kid as well. Like, [our kid] just misses him so much being away. And two weeks to a baby is just a long time, right (Participant 6).

> So that they remember that like when Dad's around we do fun things and, and Dad came up with this great idea to go down to the river and do whatever and so that, that really is what it is, it's like…Then, there are times where I don't get to see him at all and he gets to see the kids tons (Participant 3).

Furlough was also experienced as insufficient in length, in particular with the time required for both husband and wife to re-adjust to his return home. The furlough period was experienced as a short period of time. As they faced their husbands to transitioning from camp to home life, negotiating his integration in the family routine, and also managing the emotional

experience of expecting both his return and departure, the bulk of the furlough consisting of transitioning and adaptive experiences for many of the women:

> And then it did become more about like, value, valuing each other more when we do get to see each other. But it's kind of, like if he was in town for a week we'd spend the first day or two like figuring [Laughter] how we're going to communicate and then rest of the time really trying to, like, jam pack in time we're, we're enjoying each other and our family. Um and then he's off again (Participant 3).

> Like, I get very annoyed when his friends phone him from camp that he was just in camp with. Like that annoys me so much. I'm like 'They see you all the time. You're here for one week. Be present' (Participant 4).

Some of the women had a sense of relief at his departure back to camp as they could then return to their normal routine. Furthermore, some women indicated having established comfort in the lifestyle as mothers. They established dual schedules for both furlough and in camp on a rotation:

> I don't know, we've been together for so, so, so long that it's just like that's just what we're doing. You know like, I don't feel broken hearted, I don't feel, you know, all in despair about it or anything. It's just like, he's going to work and he's gonna to come home. Kinda thing. It's just what we do…Um, yeah, well, it, I don't mean to say this in a bad way but easier when he's not there. There's less laundry, there's less dishes, there's less food to be made, there's less of everything. So it's just easier, just me and her. But, I do like when he comes home. Whether it's more work or not. It's, I like when he's at home (Participant 6).

The women started to experience their lives as distinct from their husbands'; their centre of power and control became based in their domestic world, a place their husband does not always belong. Women in the study described their husband's furlough period as involving their husbands experiencing a transition period, which was supported by the women. Furlough also included integration of the men into the women's schedules. Women also indicated that they highly valued the furlough as it offered an opportunity for family time. For women who worked, in particular those with casual, on-call employment, they could more readily access their

employment while their husbands were home. Some women indicated having to shift the focus of their social world from other mothers and family to their husbands during furlough.

Women in the study had varied and adapted routines depending on whether their partners were in camp or on furlough. While some women stated they felt burdened, and at times resentful, for having to independently manage the workload of a family and household, others enjoyed having autonomy over the household. Most of the women were supported by informal and formal childcare and domestic labour support to manage alone. Connecting with one's social network, such as family or other mothers, was overwhelmingly important to the women to stave off loneliness during their husbands' time in camp. Both the women and their partners experienced an adjustment period when the husbands returned home from camp. This was variously experienced with excitement, anticipation, and also challenges and frustration in re-integrating him into the routine. Typically, the women planned for their husbands' return. They adapted their routines to support his transition, reintegration into the household, and his connection to the children. With their husbands at home, many women had the opportunity to access their social network or to work more in paid employment. However, in time many women developed a strong sense of having separate life worlds to their husbands. While it was emotionally challenging for some women with their husbands' return to camp other women felt a sense of relief at their husband's departure and a return to their independently managed routine.

Adaptation

This theme describes the adaptive process for the women in LDC. Adaptation explores their temporal experience in LDC as they recollect their entry into, initial perceptions of, and adaptation in the lifestyle both prior to having children and also as new mothers. Furthermore, adaptation also considers the women's observations and experiences of their children's adaptation to LDC. The women observed their children adapt to their fathers' time away in camp with most indicating this adaptation was tied to the development stage of the child. For most of the women, adapting to LDC was markedly impacted by the experience of becoming a new mother. By adapting to LDC over time the women described coping mechanisms and a shifting sense of self. Consider the experiences of preparing for and the initial perceptions of LDC for the women.

Entry into LDC. A majority of the women were in an LDC lifestyle with their partner prior to having children with one woman having met her husband in camp. One woman's husband started LDC soon after the children were born and another a year afterwards. The decision to enter LDC was not problematic for any of the women. As indicated above, it was normalized for most of the women, seen as inevitable, and was typically the only available form of well-paid employment. Nevertheless, for many of the women entry into LDC required preparation for the lifestyle. It also required subsequent adaptive processes, over time, to reduce uncertainty and cognitive dissonance in the lifestyle. For some of the women, they engaged in preparatory thought processes to build their understanding of and acceptance of the lifestyle prior to entry. The women who were best able to adapt to LDC engaged in this preparatory process; having a strong relationship and feeling highly connected to their partner also supported some women to adapt to the lifestyle. Three of the six women were challenged in their adaptation to

LDC as they experienced being apart from their partner for the first time. Many of the women experienced feelings of loneliness and anxiety. However, in time many of the women grew accustomed to being alone and gained a sense of independence, confidence, and assuredness in the lifestyle. One participant prepared for entry into LDC lifestyle by observing the experiences of existing LDC wives:

> I mean I was on the back side of like, I saw all of their cale-, their schedules, I knew kin-, I knew what went on within the company…A lot of them, even though they'd been together…most of them were fairly long term relationships, um, most of their, most of the wives or girlfriends worked in health care (Participant 1).

This participant had worked at the in-community based office and shop for the LDC employer, which was where she met her husband. Prior to dating her husband, she engaged in a preparatory process of understanding the context of existing LDC wives to inform her decision about entry into an LDC lifestyle with her partner. She presented as confident and assured about entry into LDC as she engaged in a process to build her understanding of it; she knew she could manage in the lifestyle. For another, the decision to enter LDC was supported through experience working in the field for a portion of their relationship "Um and I did a lot of, ugh, field work…I mean, I've always known that camp, like the camp life, camp widow, thing". (Participant 2). This participant also echoed a sense of assuredness with entry into LDC as she was already embedded in LDC as an employee. She felt a sense of confidence, based on this experience, to eventually become an in-community LDC wife and mother.

Conversely, Participant 6 indicated that she and her partner did not initially put thought into their fit for or the implications of camp work. She described them as a childless, young couple making a quick decision at a transition point in their lives:

> We were pretty young so it was just kind of, it all just happened really fast we didn't really talk about it….Um, I think that, well, we went to school right after high school to, um, try doing the bachelor of arts and we didn't really like it so we

> moved back…And they were offering the [professional diploma] program here so I thought I might as well sign up and try it…So when I did that then he kinda, he didn't really know what he wanted to do for school he so applied for a camp job and kinda just, that's how we got going on that (Participant 6).

Without a concrete plan in place, LDC was a default choice for them in a community with limited employment. However, they faced ramifications from the limited preparatory planning for entry into LDC indicating, "it was very hard". After his entry into LDC, she was faced with being alone for the first time in their relationship, which resulted in experiences of loneliness and eventually supporting her to gain a sense of individuation in the relationship:

> It was hard though…Cause we were, we've been together, we've been friends since we were like 16…And then we were, it, like every day we were together until we were like 19 or 20 or whenever he went [to camp] and it was really hard the first time he went…The first time he went he was gone for, like almost 2 solid months. I think I saw him 2 days in 2 months…And so for us it was really weird not seeing each other all the time and it was hard for me, I don't know if it was hard for him, I'm sure it was hard but, um, we kinda got used to it and now it's just, it's just what he does. [Laughter] (Participant 6).

At entry, she experienced life in LDC as lonely, uncertain, scary, and anxious. She struggled with initially knowing what to do with her herself and feeling lost. As she adapted to the lifestyle she gained a sense of self as an individual distinct and independent from her partner.

Participant 4 described meeting her husband during the off-season from camp. Despite feeling highly connected to him she did not question a relationship with a man in LDC. Her wish to maintain the relationship superseded any challenges she thought they might have with the lifestyle. She also had ample time to prepare herself for the camp season:

> [W]e began dating in the winter when he wasn't working anyway, so, we were together for probably 6 months before he even left for camp…So, I knew it was coming but I was just in love with him, so, I was like, ok, whatever, this will work (Participant 4).

Her high valuation of the relationship prevented her from engaging with or being overwhelmed by the struggles associated with LDC. However, Participant 4 also indicated that the lack of alternative employment in the community is the primary influence on their decision to remain in LDC, "He, but, like he has expressed that if he could make that money in [our community] and come home every night" (Participant 4). Participant 5 also stated that entry into the camp lifestyle was motivated by a desire to increase the family income. Her husband started LDC after she had a child. Entry into LDC was necessary to improve the family's quality of life: pay bills, rent their own house, and engage their child in recreational activities:

> Ugh, oh, it's just more of the, more stuff that [our child is] able to do, like, like with only one person working here, like, if it was just me working, then [my child] wouldn't be able to do a lot that [they] wanted to do…I think the main decision was that there's not a lot of work, working opportunities here, so. It was like, we didn't have much choice if we're gonna, gonna make money (Participant 5).

Preparation for entry into LDC involved some thought on it being challenging for her, however she found it not to be so in actuality "I thought it would have been a little bit harder, but it's not, not too hard when you, when I get to talk to him all the time and you know, they have a lot more [communication] advances now" (Participant 5). When thinking about entry into LDC her concern focused on getting support with her child and her child's adaptation:

> Mainly with helping with [my child] and stuff and how she is, like she wants to see her Dad all the time. But, like, I think it was a year or 2 years or so, when [my child] was about 2 years old I started working too so. And then my parents were around, I had to watch her a lot too when he's gone and I'm at work and (Participant 5).

The transition into LDC was easier than she expected through active communication with her husband when he was in camp and through the care-giving support of her parents. Pre-entry into

LDC she did not consider the lifestyle as overly problematic for her or her family; however, she da significant lack of choice in this decision as it related to limited employment options.

Women first experienced LDC with uncertainty in terms of safety concerns with travel to and from camp, which was further exacerbated by a lack of experience being apart in the relationship and understanding their partners' work context:

> Well, when he first started going to camp they were flying them in. He was going, um, in a helicopter, there was like a place they went to fly them in and out and everything and I did think that every day, every time he went in, every time he left, I thought 'He's gonna die'. 'He's gonna die on the helicopter'. I just had like anxiety about him being away. [Laughter]. Just because we had been together for so long before and we saw each other every day I was sure that 'He's out of my sight, he's dead', kinda thing. Yeah, but, I don't, after a couple months you're just like, ah, whatever…The fact that he phoned or messaged me and said he was alive. [Laughter]. So I thought 'Ok, maybe it's not that dangerous' (Participant 6).

Participant 6 built her understanding of her partner's employment as an unknown employment context. Another woman in the study also experienced a significant sense of anxiety relating to her husband's safety in commuting to and from camp:

> I started, the like full panic attack, the whole nine yards. I'm like 'Where is he, ugh?'. That person who's glued to their phone was me. I'm like 'Where are you? Where are you? I need to know where you are'. I'm starting to think like 'Ok, if I call the RCMP do I have a vehicle description? Do I have? Like, do I have all this information to be able to tell them even, like, maybe he just sent a message and maybe it didn't send, like, what's going on?' Um, he ended up sending me a message…it was about an hour after he should have checked in. He'd pulled over on the side of the road to have a nap. I was like 'You just, you can't do this to me. Like you can't do this to me. This is, this has [Laughter] really affected my life and I just, I can't deal with not knowing that you're safe. Just, I can't do that'. So that was, ugh, about 3 weeks before his birthday and the next day I went out and I bought him a Spot…The um little, they're the little hiking devices, well they're the check-ins (Participant 1).

Despite planning for and building an understanding of her husband's camp work prior to the start of their relationship, Participant 1 did not hold the full picture of his employment. This contributed to her sense of stress, unease, and anxiety regarding his safety. She adapted by

strategizing to maintain contact with her husband through the GPS device. She also understood in great detail the varied aspects of his employment context:

> [H]e'll be doing that for the summer. That will, ok the schedule will say that they're only going until mid-September, realistically they'll probably go until mid-October because the seasons just seem to be really nice and staying that nice that late. So projects just get extended that little while longer. They're like 'Oh, we've got extra, time. We can do a little bit more'. 'We can drill. We can move drills before winter happens and so let's get things moving. We can have a machine here tomorrow. Let's'. So it'll be a little bit less predictable, like, that shoulder season spring and fall is less predictable for when he'll be gone (Participant 1).

The women learned to adapt to the camp lifestyle challenges over time via becoming accustomed to and accepting of LDC norms and that it is a status quo for their families. They also developed internal processes to reduce any cognitive dissonance about the lifestyle. Coping mechanisms such as positive self-talk and minimization to reduce perceived stress or the impact of challenges in LDC, such as: rationalizing, dismissing, and distancing self from any problems with LDC. Women also engaged in solution-focused, practical thinking to accept LDC, with one participant repeatedly stating "You know, life just moves on" (Participant 6). Through these processes they sought to reduce the power of the LDC problems and the associated stress relating to them:

> You know, like I tell myself what I need to hear, almost, just so I don't go crazy. And it's like, OK, whatever, you know. I let a lot of stuff kind of slide too, so it's like, it's not worth my energy…You know like, if I don't understand something and it's not a big deal, it's like, you know, 'It doesn't matter, just let it go' carry on about my business kinda thing…You know like, I don't feel broken hearted, I don't feel, you know, all in despair about it or anything. It's just like, he's going to work and he's gonna to come home, kinda thing. It's just what we do' (Participant 6).

> Like before getting married, we, I, I like had these dreams of you know, we would like wake up and we have coffee together every morning and then we'd snuggle and watch movies at night. But even when he is in town and even before camp work, I mean that's just not realistic. It just doesn't, that's, I, those fantasies

> [Laughter] totally changed. And then it did become more about like, value, valuing each other more when we do get to see each other (Participant 3).

Participant 1 also reduced cognitive dissonance around LDC by relating the importance of the LDC lifestyle to her husband's sense of his trade as a vocation and contributing to his sense of identity as he is the second generation in his family to work in LDC:

> But this is a guy who, like, he, his dad, and his brother all do the same thing. They all [do this trade]. We have a rule at family dinners that everybody's together that you're not allowed to talk about [work] because that's what they will talk about [Laughter]. Like that is how much they love this (Participant 1).

She reduced her cognitive dissonance about LDC by considering the needs of her husband and by highly valuing his connection to his vocation. LDC is seen as unchangeable as she considered the significant implications to her husband for exiting the trade. She described a conversation they had, which evolved over a series of days, regarding their challenges in LDC during which her husband considered exiting LDC:

> It's like, 'But everybody suffers cause I'm away' and I was like 'Yeah, but I'd rather suffer because you're away and that we have moments that you seriously piss me off when you get home. But you love what you do' than you coming home every single day being miserable because you hate going to work (Participant 1).

If her husband can see her sacrifice to him to support his maintenance of LDC she is further supported to accept LDC.

Most women in the study were in the LDC lifestyle prior to having children. None of the women indicated that the decision to enter LDC was problematic for them. However, most of the women engaged in preparatory processes prior to entry into LDC. This supported their reduction of both uncertainty and cognitive dissonance about being in the lifestyle. Women who engaged in these preparatory processes were best able to adapt to LDC. However, it is worth noting many of the women initially experienced feelings of anxiety and loneliness as they adapted to LDC. In

time, their experiences in LDC changed as they learned to cope; adaptive thinking supported this. In the process of entry and adaptation to LDC, the women gained a sense of confidence, independence, maturation and individuation. However, for many women their initial expectations and understanding of LDC lifestyle shifted after having children.

LDC and motherhood. Having a baby in the lifestyle was a major life event for the women, which brought to the fore questions on the implications of and further adjustment to LDC. Adjustment to being a mother in LDC was characterized as feeling alone, uncertain, and scared; this was particularly so at the outset. It caused some anxiety, stress, and work towards further adapting to LDC. Women sought out parenting education and care giving support from family, friends, and formal services. Social support, primarily from the children's grandmothers or other mothers, was highly valued by women as they navigated this new role. However, formal services, such as the Pregnancy Outreach Program (POP), also played an important supportive role to the women. Support from their husbands centred on receiving emotional support vis-à-vis parenting and task support, for most of the women. Many of the women felt a sense of separateness in terms of sharing parenting with their husbands; often struggling to incorporate him into the home and a parenting role. In time, through the development of coping mechanisms and adaptive strategies, women built resilience in the lifestyle.

Adapting to motherhood in LDC brought significant change, increased workload and some initial feelings of uncertainty and being overwhelmed for the women. Many of the women struggled to navigate this new role alone with their uncertainty grounded in a lack of knowledge and experience as a mother: The experience of being alone with the baby was characterized initially as scary, uncertain, and exhausting:

> It's just, yeah it's frustrating, it's more, it's, it's frustrating when you're, you're trying to learn all these things about, you know, about your newborns [Laughter]

> on your own. Right?. ..So, yeah, there's definitely increase in the workload and decrease in the sleep, well, I used to go to bed late. I used to be night owl and I'm not anymore…[And] every time you think 'It's Saturday and like when they go down for a nap they'll nap for two hours and then I'll, you know, clean the house or whatever' and then it doesn't happen' [Laughter] (Participant 2).

The women experienced feeling a heavy weight of responsibility and uncertainty as new and also independent parents. The experience of being alone in parenting was particularly acute for women who had migrated to their respective communities and did not have the support of their families or an established social network:

> Yeah, and we don't have, we don't have built in childcare. Like my in-laws both still work and my parents are [far away] and they both work so it's not like we can just farm them off to the grandparents or something (Participant 2).

Participant 1 also migrated to her community and addressed her lack of support by working tirelessly to develop her social network with other moms. This network would prove an invaluable support to her as new mom. For many women, the first time alone with their child with their partner in camp was a significant life event for them:

> [I]t was really hard the first time he left. Because it was like 'Ugh, how am I going to deal with brand new baby by myself? And this is, like, this is a whole new lifestyle that I need to take care. And I need to make sure that I'm eating enough, and everything needs to happen'. And I am suddenly, 'You're gone, and I'm suddenly totally responsible for all of it plus a new life and totally responsible for the household… And that felt, it felt really overwhelming. (Participant 1).

> Um, I, I still remember, I was like, 'What if [the baby's] just not gonna sleep all night?' And [the baby] slept like an angel the whole night. And then he left for camp and I swear that summer that was the last time she did that. And I just remember waking up in the middle of the night with her screaming and me being like, and I'm the only one home so I have to everything, and just being exhausted. And [the baby's] always been in a crib, when [the baby] was smaller [the baby] was. And I remember just keeping [the baby] in the bed with me, it was so much easier just to co-sleep...Um, things have gotten easier, but I, that's a big memory for me (Participant 4).

Although life as a new parent was experienced as challenging for Participant 6, she indicated this was more closely tied to their age, maturity, and not planning the pregnancy vis-à-vis the camp lifestyle. She described experiencing significant relationship challenges thereafter:

> [A]fter [the baby] was born we did go through a very, very hard time. Like we're just kinda getting back to normal now…And I don't, I don't think it has anything to do with camp because he was in camp before [the baby] came along that was our normal thing. So, just, yeah, we went a very, very, very hard time. Yeah. Just with the baby and being young and still growing up and stuff I think is just everything all at once kinda thing (Participant 6).

Participant 6 rejected the notion that LDC mediated her experiences as a new mother as she stated she was already adapted to camp life prior to her baby being born. However, she also indicated having support from her mother-in-law, mother, and hubby for eight months after the child's birth as allowing her to feel confident with him returning to LDC work:

> [H]is mother, showed me how to take care of the baby. So then when, cause he did take a bit of time off before he went back to work. And, when he did go back to work I was totally fine (Participant 6).

In particular, the support of her mother-in-law facilitated her sense of comfort and confidence within LDC and her husband's eventual return to work.

When women were alone with the child(ren), they sought to understand their role as a parent and how to share the parenting experience with their husbands. Most of the women experienced parenting differently from their partners, which was variously problematic and non-problematic. This manifested itself in differing parenting styles, the fathers not being certain how to parent, and many women facilitating their partner's understanding of the children's development and their re-integration into a parenting role. As the children got older, some women indicated the fathers were more at ease in parenting upon their return from camp. While some women struggled to incorporate their husband into a parenting role others embraced the return of their husband and appreciated him diving in to the parenting role. One woman

compared the experience of parenting independent of her husband to feeling like a single parent in the LDC context:

> I've got a couple of friends who are single parents…And, it was like, you know what? I actually feel a lot more like we understand each other than the friends who have partners because he just wasn't there. Even when he was home, he wasn't there, I got to manage everything on my own anyways (Participant 1).

At the outset, she held a certain amount of resentment for her situation as she considered the workload of parenting alone and also supporting her husband to catch up on parenting at his return. She struggled with her husband having fewer skills with the baby than her:

> So he comes home sometime in the frenzy of feeding and tries to jump in and help. And that usually looks like he tries to offer [the baby their] food, [the baby's] not interested in eating it because he doesn't, [the baby] likes it when you ham it up and it's like, 'Oh, this oh, man this avocado is so good, mmmm, this is sooo good, would you like a bite? No, ok well I'm just going to keep eating it if you, oh you would like a bite, ok well'. He doesn't do that, he's like 'Here would you like a bite of avocado' and [the baby's] like 'No, no I really wouldn't'. I take it and [the baby's] like 'Oh, yes I would' (Participant 1).

Another woman enjoyed sharing the experience of his recognition of the baby's development upon his return from camp. Her husband's return home also provided her with an opportunity to build her own awareness of the baby's development:

> When he comes home he's like 'Oh, you know, [the baby's] more verbal now'. 'And [the baby] can say these words and [they] couldn't say those words two weeks ago' kinda thing. And it's like for me, it's like, 'Ok, yeah, ok, I could see that now'. I can pick up on some things but when you're with somebody every day all the time. You miss things, right? They're just kind of like that. But yeah, he'll come home and [the baby's] had a growth spurt or can, like, I, I remember when he was gone, she started jumping (Participant 6).

Women further described LDC as challenging in terms of consistent connection and shared parenting with the husband as it is tied to the children's developmental stage:

> Because he, to him, [the baby] was just a little wee person who, [is] a lump kinda of thing. So he, you know, "It doesn't matter what's going on, [the baby] does, [the baby's] not comprehending anything anyways' so he didn't think it did impact. So I had to talk to him too and say, 'Yes it does. [The baby] realizes

> you're there when you're there and [the baby] realizes you're gone when you're gone (Participant 6).

> Um, but initially [he] was really sad about it because they were just really attached to me. And so, um, he would, he felt like his return wasn't exciting enough. But over, over time it's become exciting enough because he does things like take them to the park (Participant 3).

With their husbands away for extended periods of time, some of the women viewed the relationship between the children and their father as problematic. Some fathers had uncertainty about the developmental stage and appropriate responses to child. The mothers played an integral role in bridging the gap between the fathers and children. Two of the women rationalized this disconnect as relating to women being better suited to parent young babies and/or the father not knowing how to parent.

Women adapted to motherhood in LDC through a variety of supports: social support, formal services, emotional support from their husbands, and building coping skills. Social support and formal services included: children's grandparents, other mothers, and formal services. Women expressed highly valuing the support of family, other mothers, and services. At times, these supports replaced the husband's parenting role. Family, in particular the children's grandparents, played a vital role in supporting the new mothers. The grandparents provided mothers opportunities to learn to parent and obtain child care. Furthermore, the women were able to share the parenting experience with the grandparents, which helped offset not being able to do so with their partners:

> And she [mother-in-law] helped us a lot. And, you know, and he was in camp so she was the one that helped me, so she was the one that I had to talk to, you know what I mean, like, I kind of processed myself with her. And then he did his own processing (Participant 6).

> It's just like, how am I gonna do this on my own with him being gone. But, um, within days I was like, 'Mom, can you help?' and she, my mom's a big help…My

> mom is just always there. [Laughter]. And if she's not then I'm going to her house (Participant 4).

For Participant 1, her ideas of family life and parenting shifted over time from a shared parenting experience with her husband to her social network taking a more central role in her parenting support and shared experience:

> Cause that's really helped me with, you know, trying to understand this whole being a parent thing, is having other people who are sharing the experience and it's like 'Oh you're going through the same thing, you're going through the same frustrations' (Participant 1).

She experienced this context with a certain amount of loss as she had wanted to share the parenting process and developmental milestones with her partner. Participant 6 also shifted a shared parenting experience from her husband to a social support, primarily to her mother-in-law. She stated her partner did not have the experience or knowledge to offer parenting support to her, particularly at the outset when the baby was new. As such, she sought out support from the grandmothers with care giving and learning to parent:

> I didn't really expect him to be there so much as I needed the mothers, the grandmothers to the baby. You know like, I'm a new parent; I don't know what I'm doing. He's a new parent he doesn't know what he's doing, so, you know, how useful can he be to me, you know, as a new parent when I need people who know they're doing kinda thing, kinda thing (Participant 6).

Formal services also played an important role in supporting the mothers to understand and learn about parenting and gain much needed childcare:

> Ugh, and ended up going in to the POP for help because I wanted, I wanted somebody else's perspective on it. And the ladies there have always been very supportive and they're really good listeners. They may not know the answers, but they're very well connected within the community. So they can suggest where that answer might be found (Participant 1).

> But their hours in school are always the same and then my time with them shifts with them a little bit and then there's a network of babysitters that I have to organize on top of that (Participant 3).

This was particularly valuable to Participant 1 who migrated to northern BC and lacked a social network in the community:

> [I]t's been a lot more of a struggle. Um, because I don't have family here, he doesn't have [family] here. Trying to find that balance of like ok 'I just need a break'. And, there's a lot of things that my friends and they're like 'Oh yeah, you know, my partner helps out with this, my partner helps out with that, and you know. And if baby wakes up in the middle of the night you know, I'm able to take him, breastfeed for a while and then if baby won't settle down I can just pass him off'. Yeah, I don't have that option. I have nobody to pass it off to. I have no body who can take [the baby] when I'm trying to vacuum or make dinner or anything else. I do everything (Participant 1).

She experienced motherhood as being alone and unsupported, at first. However, she was prolific at developing her social network with other mothers to compensate in this context. As a migrant to northern BC, Participant 2 also lacked a family or an established social support network. She reconciled this by grounding herself in her identity as a strong, independent woman who struggles to ask for help:

> Um, it was a little more awkward in the beginning just cause, ugh, I think they (in-laws) didn't know, um, they didn't know what role to play, you know, in trying to help me. And, so, sometimes it didn't feel like I was really getting any help. And, I'm really terrible at asking for help too. I'm really terrible at telling people, you know 'Go do this' or 'Please do my dishes' [Laughter] you know 'cause I don't have time' [Laughter]. Like, I've, I'm horrible at that. I wish people would just come and be like 'I see your dishes need cleaning'. [Laughter] (Participant 2).

As an independent woman who characterized herself as lacking the propensity to ask for help, she experienced being a new mother as somewhat of a challenge. She balanced this experience as she understood herself to be an educated, independent, strong career woman; a context she felt trapped within:

> Ugh [Laughter] I try to be a feminist, but at the same time I get trapped in, well not trapped, but like I fall in to these roles naturally just because I find it that I'm terrible at asking for help (Participant 2).

As such, she reduced the value of her child caring labour and thus willingness to ask for

and accept parenting help from her husband or others:

> I did most of that just because, it just didn't make, it just didn't seem to make a lot of sense to me to wake [my hubby] up just to like, go take a baby [Laughter] and. Put him on, you know, like it, I could do it all myself it was fine (Participant 2).

Women indicated they most highly valued emotional support from their partners vis-à-vis child caring and household chores; it was important to feel valued and appreciated for their hard work as the stay-in-community parent raising the children. As such, women relied less on task and parenting support from their partners and more on appraisal and emotional support. They valued acknowledgment of their good work as the primary parent. This provided them a sense of reassurance that they were parenting well. Also, in times of emotional distress characterized with frustration and exhaustion, the husband was an important support to process those feelings:

> So I was happy to have him there, like, you know if I need to cry or if I need a hug or if I needed a little encouragement. But I kind of relied on, like, his mom helped me a lot when I had the baby so. I don't know, I needed him there more for me than the baby, if that makes any sense. Yeah, just to tell me I'm not terrible and I'm doing ok, kinda thing (Participant 6).

> And, he just wants to quit and come home. And especially, when I'm having a hard time, like it's in that first year some days I'd just be like, on the phone, like, balling my eyes out. And he would be like, 'I'll quit my job, like right now, I'll be home tomorrow'. And I'm like, 'No, don't do that, you can't do that! I ju-, I just want to vent'. [Laughter]. He's like 'I can't stand to hear you like this' and I'm like 'Well we need you to stay working' [Laughter] (Participant 2).

Being a mother in LDC required accepting one's situation, focusing on being strong for their children, ensuring the children are attaching to at least one of their parents, and making use of organizational skills and a routine to support their adaptation:

> It's just the same. Um, it's different now with a kid though, like, when it was just him and I it was kind of like, ugh, he's gone, what am I going to do with myself, kinda thing. But having a kid it's like, ok, we just have to carry on cause the kid needs me to carry on and, so we have a schedule (Participant 6).

In time, the women built a sense of comfort and confidence as mothers in LDC: For some of the women the experience was also a catalyst for positive personal growth, maturation, and confidence:

> Like right now I'm good when he's gone. I can handle it. I'm not overwhelmed. I'm not like, I'm going to pull my hair out. I can't do this… [And], him and I lived on our own without parents or baby for a year and I felt lazy, like, you know, no purpose almost, like, so I, you know, I'd do the dishes whenever I felt like it, or I didn't if I didn't want to, same with laundry, same with housework, all that. And then with her, now with [our baby], and living on our own, I feel like there is a purpose, so I'm much more motivated to get everything done (Participant 6).

> Um, I've definitely become a more confident parent in the end. And it is becau-, and it is because it's the single mom aspect of it. Um, and then over time [my hubby] has really come around to, like now he'll just outright say that I've done a good job. [Laughter] (Participant 3).

For one woman, she described growth and the success of their relationship as parents in LDC as facilitated by access to counseling early on in their parenthood:

> [P]erhaps him and I would have butt head[s] more because we were in each other's face all the time and maybe we wouldn't have thought that could, you know, repair or, or help-…-help through like family counselling. Like, I feel like it wou[ld], it was really timely for us to spend a little bit of time apart and see-…-like is this, is it important for us to be together. It was really timely for us to spend a little bit of time apart (Participant 3).

Having time apart in LDC was now seen as beneficial to them as parents. Her positive adjustment to the lifestyle is characterized by a shift in becoming more independent and appreciating time away from her husband to give space to the relationship. Many of the women worked tirelessly to develop a sense of competence and comfort in their new role as a mother. Despite the workload and tediousness of motherhood in LDC, the women built a sense of self-efficacy. This was aided by a process of learning to parent; gaining emotional support from their partners and instrumental support from others in their social network; making use of child care

and other formal services; and implementing adaptive strategies, such as establishing a routine. Women also indicated that as their children got older it was easier to parent in LDC.

Children's adaptation to LDC. Women in the study indicated that their children's adaptation to LDC was dependent on their developmental stage. Mothers described their children, when they were young babies, as not initially realizing that their father was gone. One mother indicated her child would not recognize their father when he returned from camp. Another woman first noticed her children's emotional responses to the father's absence in their first few months of life:

> They're only one [year old] so I don't think they, they don't really get it as much as older kids do, yet, I mean. There've definitely been, well, with [the one baby] a little more. [They are] clingy. And [the other one] the, um, is way more easy-going…[But] [w]hen they were about, I noticed it a little bit when they were about 3 or 4 months old they'd get a little grumpy, um, when he first went to camp (Participant 2).

> Um, it used to overwhelm [the baby] and [the baby] kinda like, when [the baby] was small, like around a year, [the baby], was, you could tell [the baby] was happy to see him, [the baby] recognized who he was but was kind of scared of him…Like 'Ok, I know you're my Dad, but, I don't know if I'm excited to see you" and she was really timid around him…And I like had to tell her 'That's your daddy. You can hug him, you can kiss him and stuff' and the more I talked to her the more she realized 'Ok, I can just, you know, run up to him if I need to whatever' (Participant 6).

In time, as the children got older, they built awareness of their father's schedule and absences. This also informed their responses to LDC:

> So, you know, [the child will] have a whiney session or cry or whatever when he leaves and you can tell the child's] in a mood for a few days after. Well once [they] adjusted to him being gone, [the child's] ok again….So, yeah, I don't know, ...I think [the child's] getting better the more I talk to [them] the better it is (Participant 6).

> I mean there was definitely, yeah fairly early on the [children] would, it would be obvious that they knew that he was gone, right, like they'd be kind of grumpy the first day or two and. And then we'd sort of get in to a routine and it wouldn't' be

> so bad and then there'd be like a day or two of adjustment when he got home too (Participant 3).

Noticing her child's first experience getting upset with her father leaving for camp was a particularly strong experience for Participant 6:

> [T]he first [time] that he left and she kind of came unglued, I was just like, 'Ok, whoa', like, it's too much for her, it's too much for me, then we can't do this anymore'… And that's why I kind of started talking to her about it… Cause, you know, when he first did it was really for me and I had to process it for myself. Like no one was there to help me…So when I saw that it just broke her heart I was just like, 'Ok, so we need, we need to do, we need to something here cause I don't want her to have to do that every, single time he comes and goes. You know, so, if she knows it's coming it's less of a blow, kinda thing" (Participant 6).

Participant 6 had thoughts of quitting the LDC lifestyle out of concern for her daughter's well-being. She was left questioning her strength to manage her child's emotional-behavioral response to her father leaving. It brought to the fore concerns from her own childhood and her father being away in camp and she did not know or understand where he was when he was gone.

> So, that's just, that's just something that I didn't get as a kid so I figure if I do, you know, if I do this for her then maybe she'll understand more. Oh, yeah. Like I didn't see my Dad very much at all when I was a kid and it was confusing and, you know, like and my mom never talked to me about it so I figure, you know, maybe that's kind of the difference (Participant 6).

In observing her child adjust to LDC she also noticed her husband's adjustment in his support to their child. This was valuable to her in terms of supporting her child's adaptation to LDC; for both parents to consistently teach and inform the child. As such, she became very aware and intentional about supporting her daughter to understand LDC and maintain a strong connection to her father.

Mothers also related their babies' responses to LDC as being tied to their own emotional state in relation to their husbands' schedule:

> For like a day or something they'd have tantrums and sometimes like the day before he got home, I don't know if they like, sensed it off of me. They'd just have just like a horrible day. [Laughter] (Participant 2).

Participant 2 developed an awareness of their own emotional responses to her husband's departure and maintained strength to support their children:

> Like, it's just, it can be a long two weeks and I know that there's a lot of people like when their husband leaves or their partner leaves it's, they take it really hard, I try not to, like, it is hard, but like, I try not to like, make a big deal cause I don't want the boys to get this idea that like when dad leaves it's time to cry and be upset. It's like, no, you know, take him to the airport 'Bye Dad. See you later. Let's go have fun'. [Laughter] (Participant 2).

Participant 4's husband has an annual off-season in the winter months. She expressed concern with her child's adaptation to two different parenting styles:

> I don't think [the child's] really understood anything. Um, although [their, their] attitude changes. [The child's] very spoiled. For sure, like, in getting [their] own way with him. And with me it's not like that. [Laughter]…Ugh, so as soon as he walks in the door, [the child] is crying and throwing [themselves] all over for everything that [they] wan[t] (Participant 4).

Her initial concerns with having a child in LDC focused on her child remembering and maintaining connection to her father. It shifted to adapting to differences in parenting styles: the father was more open and relaxed while the mother was more structured.

One mother indicated that her child's adaptation to the father's absences was not a significant struggle, which she related to her child having access to the grandparents:

> [My child] wants to see [their] Dad all the time. But, like, I think it was a year or 2 years or so, when [my child] was about 2 years old I started working too so…And then my parents were around, I had to watch her a lot too when he's gone and I'm at work (Participant 5).

This also supported Participant 5 to work while her husband engaged in camp work.

Some mothers had initial concern about how LDC would impact their children, "[W]e were really worried that [our child] wasn't going to remember him…Yeah. But like he has Wi-Fi and

stuff so we Facetime and we chat, regularly" (Participant 4). However, they integrated strategies to support their children's understanding of and current and future wellness in LDC. The mothers observed and assessed the children's understanding of and adaptation to their fathers' LDC schedule. It was a continuous process similar to a system of checks and balances: the mothers adjust and establish support techniques to ensure the children are adapting well and to consider any adjustments required to the supportive adaptation strategies the mothers use with their children:

> But you can tell by the way [the child] behaves that something's not right…So I have to tell [them] again…Like, as long as I'm picking up on [their, their] behaviour…And talking to her about it. I think it'll be ok, you know. And he talks to [the child] too…Like, he'll come home and he'll say "Ok, I was at work. I'm back now. We can do this, we can do that" and he, like, it took him a while to be able to do that (Participant 6).

Adaptation support strategies included managing their own emotional responses to the father's departure, providing routine and consistency to the children, facilitating communication with and attachment to the father when he's in camp, familiarizing the children with camp by showing its location on a map and tracking the work/furlough schedule on calendar, and explaining the benefits of camp work for the family:

> I think it's kind of in the approach, like my approach. I think that as long as I tell [my child] what's going on and prepare [my child] for everything [they will] be ok…You know, I'm, I can't, I can't prevent [my child] from being upset or anything, like if it's going to upset [my child] it's going to upset [my child], but I can lighten the blow…So I think, so longs a I talk to [my child] and tell [them] what's going on and explain that it's OK that she feels this way or doesn't feel this way that, that it'll be OK for [my child] (Participant 6).

> [W]ell they did, they definitely had to make that transition between, um, you know just, just full out missing him to understanding that there's a schedule and that, he'll come back and they used to, you know, ask where is he and so I'd show them on a map and that there was distance between us and I think they're a little more geographically aware than maybe most four year olds. [Laughter] (Participant 3).

In consideration of the future of their children in LDC, a few mothers held concerns with their children reaching their teenage years. In particular, they were concerned about managing teenage behaviour alone or male children needing their father. This was particularly important for one mother who observed a cousin with older children who struggled with her LDC and her teenage children:

> Well, it would, it's a bit of a learning curve with [my child] like been trying to figure out ways where we can try to get [them] to understand why he needed to go there or…or at least needs a job or something. Like sometimes [my child] just doesn't want me to go to work either…But, like, trying to tell [my child] like all the things that we wouldn't be able to do if we didn't have him working out there and me working too (Participant 5).

Although the women do not consider LDC ideal for their children, overall they saw LDC as normalized and non-problematic for their children. This particularly held true for the mothers with children who were older, such as 3-4 years old; the mothers observed that they had already been able to adapt to LDC. This related not only to the efforts they had placed in helping their children to adapt to the context but also that the children will normalize LDC as it is so predominant in the community; they will have peers with fathers in LDC.

> So I think, so long as I talk to [the child] and tell [them] what's going on and explain that it's OK that she feels this way or doesn't feel this way that, that it'll be OK for [the child]. Like it will be normal that he goes to work. And it's Ok that he goes to work (Participant 6).

> [P]art me of me wonders if she just grows up with it being like this. If she'll question it until she gets to the point of being in school? And even then, I mean, we live in a northern town where there's lots of people who work camp jobs. So whether that will even come up as something that's out of the norm. Um…because even at her daycare I know there's at least one other family where Dad works away so even there it's not out of the norm (Participant 1).

The women understood that the family's success in LDC was dependent on the qualities and skills of the parent who remains at home. The women held a central role in

supporting their children to develop, understand, and gain healthy, adaptive emotional and cognitive responses to the context.

Women in the study stated that their children's adaption to LDC was mediated by the developmental stage of the children. As such, young babies did not initially recognize their father was gone with young babies making strange at their fathers return. As the children got older they recognized their fathers' absences and emotionally and behaviorally responded to the departures and time away. For some women, they questioned a continuation of LDC in the reflection on the initial struggles they observed in their children. Women employed strategies to support their children's adaptation to LDC, such as managing their own emotional responses, providing routine and consistency, facilitating communication with and attachment to the father, familiarizing the children with camp by showing its location on a map and tracking the work/furlough schedule on calendar, and explaining the benefits of camp work for the family. In consideration of a future in LDC with the children, mothers had concern regarding parenting challenges with teenage children. The women described LDC as normalized and non-problematic for their children as so many of the children's peers also lived in LDC families. Furthermore, women with children ages 3-4 years old had confidence in the lifestyle as they had been able to observe their children's positive adaptation to the lifestyle over time.

Separate life worlds. In time, as many of the women became accustomed to living independent of their partners while raising their children they developed a sense of living in separate and distinct life worlds from them, "So it's, it's like two lives for him, kind of, like, he has his life with us and then he has his life in camp" (Participant 6). As their lives centred more

on managing the household and childcare than their partners, some women sought to build a sense of self-efficacy in this context – to gain power, control, and agency in the domestic space. For some women they owned and controlled this space and identified their husbands as not understanding the extent of the women's work at home. As such, the men were characterized as lacking the skills and experience to fill this role:

> Oh, I have to make so many adjustments and he'll be like 'Oh, what are we having for dinner?' and I'm like 'Ok, well I have what I like eating for dinner' and [the baby] tends to like eating what I like eating for dinner. And he's like 'Oh, we should [have] steak nachos' or something and I'm like 'Ok, well then you're going to need to go to the grocery store, you're going to need to get all the ingredients, you're going to need to cut everything up, you're going to need to assemble it, and then it's going to need to go into the oven for a while and it's already 5:30pm' (Participant 1).

As the in-community partner and parent, many women also asserted their role as lead parent. They firmly held the role as the family's organizer and primary caregiver. Women further built a sense of self-efficacy through their capacity to also do their husbands' tasks. Completing their husbands' work while he was in camp was viewed as both empowering and at times somewhat burdensome. However, it was often necessary within the lifestyle:

> I'm more than capable of picking up a hammer and fixing things or wrenching something or applying epoxy to whatever, like you know if something's dripping under the sink. I'm more than capable of taking it a part, putting epoxy on to things, and sticking it back together. Whereas [my hubby] doesn't need to know where stuff is stored in the kitchen (Participant 1).

Other women left tasks for their partner to complete at his return or paid other people to complete them. Agency over the domestic world involved holding the role of manager and leader of the household by coordinating and planning decisions and resources:

> [M]y role as a, as a mom, um, is, I think I need to be the boss. And think that [my hubby] thought he had to be the boss. And so now, I think we're mostly on the same page that like I figure things out (Participant 3).

> [I]t's just, like I'm already the one who makes all the decisions, [my hubby's] basically is like 'Oh, you researched it? Cool! You know the best answer then'. There's no argument. There's not 'Well, I was thinking about it and I thought maybe this would be something to consider'. There's none of that. If I've researched it, as far as he's concerned it's gold (Participant 1).

Some women asserted their role as primary household manager to their husbands while others did not. The women valued the recognition and acknowledgment from their husbands for their positive contributions to family system and leadership of household and family while they were away. With the arrival of her baby, Participant 4 stated she started to remain at home more and socialize less; her world became more domestic-focused. She indicated this was a positive adjustment as it gave her a sense of stability and reduced conflict with her husband. She held a sense of pride in becoming more grown up and she was happy her husband also saw this in her:

> [H]e wasn't always so letting me go run free. But I think we've both grown up so much just in the past three years with our [child]…Yes, we used to argue a lot when he was in camp. Um, because, I'm so used to doing whatever I want and then he goes camp and he's like 'I'd rather you didn't do those things' like, going out of town to be with my friends and staying out of town for a few days. But I didn't have a child so, and I wasn't working, why not? That was in my mind. But he's, he was telling me like, 'When you go do those things, I'm at camp worrying about you and then I'm stressed at work' and I don't want him to be stressed about what I'm doing, um, and that is all gone. Like he's just, I think he sees how much I've grown up (Participant 4).

Grounding herself in a private, domestic world also helped her normalize and build confidence as a mother in LDC. It also contributed to her relationship stability. In contrast to many of the other women, Participant 4 described she and her husband as highly integrated in the domestic sphere when he's home. She articulated that she did not feel burdened by traditional gender roles as her husband supported her with all facets of household management and child-raising without her asking for his support.

For many of the women, it is worth noting that building a sense of agency within the domestic realm was attenuated by the notion that their partners' work in camp was more highly

valued than their own. Furthermore, at times being in the domestic sphere was described as invalidating, and mundane. For example, Participant 1 described her day-to-day work as "just" making food, cleaning, and other tasks while she could speak in great detail about the tasks, processes, decisions, and extenuating facets involved in her husband's work. While for Participant 6, she indicated the importance of giving her partner space to relax during his furlough as he has worked hard while in camp. She was limited in perceiving the value of her domestic labour:

> And that works for us because, you know, I appreciate that he's gone for two weeks and he's tired from working so much. So I'm happy to just do it all the time. You know, so, I think that makes a big difference in who you are and what your expectations are. You know, cause there's, like I know, I know people who their husbands go away to camp and then when they come home, their husbands have to do everything because she's been doing everything the 'Two weeks that you were in camp and you were just in camp, doing, you know, you were just there working doing nothing after work, you were just laying around and you had a holiday' kinda thing (Participant 6).

Participant 6 asserted the importance of having choice in this context; she was satisfied with how the labour was organized in the relationship. The women's higher valuation of their partners' work allowed them to sustain their relationships in LDC. In particular, Participant 6 presented her approach as an ideal and that camp wives ought to appreciate the efforts of their husbands.

Over time, the women held a sense of living in separate life worlds from their partners as they became accustomed to living independently from them. In this context, their life worlds centred on home life as they took primary leadership and control over the management of the household and children. Women held the roles of primary organizer, caregiver, leader, and manager of the family and household. Many women built a sense of self-efficacy in this context as their power, control, and agency was grounded in the domestic space. They also gained a sense of self-efficacy in their capacity to perform their husbands' tasks. As a result, some women

identified their husbands as lacking the skills and experience to perform this work and identified their husbands as not understanding the extent of their work at home. The women highly valued recognition and acknowledgement from their husbands in performing the aforementioned roles, which sustained the family in LDC. However, for many of the women their sense of agency in the domestic realm was tenuously connected to the idea that their partners' work in camp was more highly valued than their own. In addition, at times the women described the domestic sphere as invalidating, and mundane.

Adaptation for the women considered their temporal experiences in LDC. It considered their experiences recollecting their entry into, initial perceptions of, and adaptation in the lifestyle. Adaptation was experienced in two primary stages: pre- and post-motherhood. The women also described their observation and support of their children's adaptation to LDC. The children's adaptation was tied to the developmental stage of the child. The women did not indicate significant concern regarding a future in LDC with children. The women not only saw this lifestyle as normalized in the children's peer groups, but those with older children (3-4 years old) found that the children adapted positively thus far. Women did have concerns, however, about independently parenting their children when they are teenagers. Over time, the women adapted to LDC and gained a shifting, separate sense of self from their husbands. They built a sense of power, control, and self-efficacy in the domestic world. They held roles of organized, planner, and manager of the household; this was a role many of the women asserted as being more competent in and needing control over with their husbands. However, this was attenuated by a sense of more highly valuing their husbands' work in camp than their own. Importantly, the women described needing acknowledgement and recognition from their husbands for their hard

work and capacity to manage the household independently and support the family to sustain LDC.

Identity and Roles

Women in the study held varied roles and understandings of themselves as they existed and moved within these roles. Women functioned as a nucleus in their families: a central point of organization, coordination, and maintenance of the family unit through assessing and supporting the family unit. The family's maintenance of the LDC lifestyle and overall well-being was supported by the women holding this role. Furthermore, many of the women indicated experiencing a shifting sense of self, which relates in part to becoming mothers. They described moving from a more public and/or career centred life to a more private, family focused life. In this context, they asserted a sense of relief at the end of maternity leave and the opportunity to re-engage with their former career selves. They appreciated the opportunity to balance a sense of who they were as individuals outside of being a wife and mother. In this milieu, women described a negotiated understanding of and experience within gender roles.

Nucleus of the family. Women in the study engaged in varied roles and support to the family unit. They were a central force that connects and maintains the health of the family system. In this context they held varied roles to guide family decisions, manage and organize the household, parenting, facilitate their partner's parenting, and support the husband's well-being. Fulfilling these roles in the family supported the family's stability and maintenance of the LDC lifestyle. For many of the women, being the family nucleus was an experience of sacrificing themselves for the greater good of the family; burdensome for them when they did not have enough energy; and also demonstrative of personal strength, resourcefulness, competence, and resilience.

Many of the women had a multitude of roles and functions in their family system. They held important leadership and management over the household, children, and family unit, in particular: children's education; childcare needs; paid labour, such as house cleaning and yard work; household finances the husband's well-being, education, and career decisions and completion; and relationship support. Holding the role of family nucleus maintained the unity of and supported the strength of the other family members:

> Being everybody's centre, you're like, well where's my centre? Who's that person for me, kinda thing. So I have to be my own as well as there's…I feel like the baby's grandmothers are a big part of that. Like, um, um [my hubby's] mom actually has helped me through most of, most of like this whole motherhood thing. And, you know, there's some things that she's said to me where I can, like if I'm struggling, but I don't want to talk to anybody or I can't talk anybody then I can, like, recall things that she's said and it's just like, ok, 'That's kinda, that's what applies here' so I kinda just have to use that to get through this kind of thing (Participant 6).

> Well it, I, she, she [paid domestic labourer] was a lovely, um, um addition to our family life. And, it, so I would have her come for 4 hours every week or every other week depending on what it looked like. Um, she did a lot. She cleaned a lot. She would mop the floors, she would do all the things. And, because [my hubby]…he was super picky about all of that kind of work (Participant 3).

Participant 6 described working towards building a strong understanding of self, her needs, and building her resilience so that she could support her family members. She also understood the family functioned as a system with each member learning from, growing, and influencing the other. However, she indicated the importance of being able to maintain strength and insight for herself in order to continually support the family to maintain their well-being in LDC:

> You know, like it's just like, I process, she processes, he processes, so it's just like constantly. You know, three different ways of processing so, I am, and I feel like I'm kind the centre for everyone. So I need to process first and then I need to be like, "Ok, this is what's happening", you know what I mean? (Participant 6).

Women holistically supported their husbands in varied facets of life: perseverance with trade school, encouragement in adaptation to camp work, facilitating his understanding of the children,

and supporting his emotional well-being and resilience. Supporting the husband with these challenges was necessary for the women to encourage his growth and strength and also perseverance in lifestyle. Women recognized the importance of their partner staying in camp as it is necessary for the stability of family. As such, they supported the maintenance of their husbands' mental wellness is important.

Women led, or felt responsible to lead, the health of their relationship with their husbands:

> [M]y role as a wife. I th-, I think I, I have to tell myself that sometimes, [Laughter], that ugh, that I need to, you know, stop and, like stop being frustrated with whatever situation or whatever's going on. And le-, like, le-, listen to what it is that [my hubby] actually really needs and then try to be the person that can be there to encourage him through it (Participant 3).

> We're not communicating, in-depth. We're not checking in about how we both really are. Like, we do the surface level checks. But it's not the deep down …So we kind of get lost in the shuffle there because it's kind of like well 'What's going on with [the baby]?' 'What's [the baby] doing?'. And, I don't have the energy to go through everything that's gone on for [the baby] and recap my day, that I'm already exhausted of because I've lived the entire day, and then go into, 'So what's going on for you?', 'Where's your day at? Where's your head at?'. 'Do you have frustrations that your experiencing? What's going on with people that you're working with?' Like I don't have, have the energy to go into that (Participant 1).

Participant 1 was challenged to manage the energy she required to care for the baby and to also continue to lead the health of the couple's relationship. Participant 3 described coordinating the couple's access to counseling after having children and then soon after starting LDC. She indicated her skills and foresight supported them to make this decision for the betterment of the relationship:

> [W]e had to go to see someone to, to learn how to talk to each other again. So she was like a family counsellor of sorts, um, and ugh, and she helped us recognize that we actually really do want to work together as a team...I think we sought out family support [counselling] because I was smart and, and like knew that we could do that and it was available to us…I also, I have a certificate of dispute

> resolution. So I could always see the path and, and, and I know that he needed to hear it from someone other than me. And that maybe, I, in, in a number of ways I also needed to get my perceptions in check but seeing the family therapist in the beginning, even just for a handful of times was the change that we needed (Participant 3).

Three of the participants described supporting their husbands' adjustment to and maintenance of both post-secondary education and also the LDC lifestyle. They encouraged their husbands to gain confidence in going to camp to meet their career and financial goals:

> Especially through being an adult learner in school. That was really difficult for him and he definitely isn't super forthright with his emotions, but at one point, like, said like, I, like I wouldn't have made it through year 1 if you didn't make me. [Laughter]. So, so I, I saw that that was my role. Nobody else was gonna make him do it. And, and we saw him through and he's making his way through all of the levels now [Laughter] (Participant 3).

> Well and especially for somebody who's so happy doing what he does. You know, I know there's late nights. I know machines break down unpredictably. I know some things don't go right when you're out in camp. But at the same time he's happy doing what he does and I would so much rather that than the alternative (Participant 1).

Participant 3 indicated that she felt a sense of accomplishment at having gained needed recognition for the value of her support to her husband. Her use of the word "we" indicated her understanding of the importance of this support to the family as a unit. Participant 6 also described her partner as benefiting from her management of the household and carrying the bulk of its associated workload:

> Like, um, I like to do, like, laundry a certain way and dishes a certain way and whatever. And, um, he, he's one of those guys who's happy to just be like, 'Ok, you want to do it, go ahead, whatever' and he just kinda lets it happen whereas I'm the one to make it happen…I think that he has a pretty good little life, like the way things go. And, um, that's fine. You know it works for us, right (Participant 6).

Women perceived this role as both natural yet also one of self-sacrifice. It is often important to place the needs of the family above their own. They were able to withstand challenges while

their uncertainties, frustrations, and needs are placed as secondary. As such, they also demonstrated a sense of resilience and strength in this context:

> Um, well, it's usually really one sided. Because I'm listening about whatever he's doing, um, and he'll want to know did the kids do good in swimming or something. Um, I'm, I know that he can't really be there for me to be interested in what I'm doing… But, I ugh, I feel like it was kind of a, kind of a deal to begin with like 'Why don't you ask me about me?' but, um, I get it. He's the one who's going through the big changes. Where do, we're here to be like his nice home when he's, like, bouncing back to us [Laughter] (Participant 3).

Women's strength in this context was built upon the ability to assess and plan around challenges. They coped with uncertainty, planned for change or the unknown, and sought out the best results/outcomes for family. Participant 6 considered herself resilient and capable; she was reluctant to seek out more support than she believes necessary. She took on a lot of tasks for the family and did so with a sense of unwavering resilience and strength. She further described needing extra services beyond child minding as superfluous as she holds a sense of resilience and competence as a strong, rural mother and wife:

> [D]own in bigger cities, they have diaper services. Where there's people that actually, like you can phone them up, and they will bring you fresh diapers and take away your dirty diapers. And I just thought that was so weird that there's people who do that. And, for me, you know, I throw the crap diaper in the garbage and then I take the garbage out and then I take it to the dump, kinda thing. So, I think it's funny, like it's kind of silly. But I guess if, you know, you're in the city and you live in an apartment, that kind of thing is helpful (Participant 6).

Participant 2 described her husband's reluctance to remain in camp as he considered being away from the children and not physically present to support her in times of emotional need, "Because he's out there being like, 'Oh, I just want to be home, I hate being up here, I hate being away from our [children], blahblahblah" (Participant 2). Although she encouraged him to remain in camp, his sense of discomfort and indication of sacrifice in LDC helped her to accept her role as the stay in town parent. It is important to her to know that the LDC lifestyle and the

accompanying requirement for her to manage the household and children were not expected of her but rather it was a necessary choice.

Participant 3 held a certain amount of uncertainty with independently taking on all decisions in the family. She experienced some grief with the loss of shared intimacy in making decisions with her husband:

> I mean, as much as I feel like I just want to make all the decisions, like I, I'm unfortunately, I am that person. Um, it was always really great to have [my hubby] as like a sounding board like in the minute to be like hey 'What if we did this?'. And then he usually has some kind of like devil's advocate like 'Well, this could happen'. And so it was more difficult to be making all the decisions without having anyone else's opinion there (Participant 3).

Solitary decision-making also felt like a lot of responsibility; a burden to carry if results were not as she and importantly, her husband wanted, "And then I mean, if it, cause if it doesn't work out like it wasn't a team decision, it's all me. Like, it's, I'm, I did that. Yeah, I have to, me, yeah be accountable for all that. [Laughter]". (Participant 3). Again, she benefited from receiving appraisal from her husband for her role in managing family and household. She understood this work as important, hard work.

As the nucleus of the family, women in this study functioned as a central force that maintains the health, well-being, and stability of the family. They accomplished this through their varied roles in guiding the family decisions, managing and organizing the household, parenting, and facilitating their husbands' adaptation to and success in LDC. Furthermore, many of the women held a central role of supporting the health of the relationship with their husbands. For many of the women, functioning as the family nucleus required sacrificing themselves for the greater good of the family; at times this was burdensome for them when they did not have enough energy; yet was also demonstrative of personal strength, resourcefulness, competence, and resilience. However, women recognized the importance of holding this central coordinating,

organizing and supporting role to sustain the family in LDC; the husbands' work in LDC was important for the stability of family.

Shifting self - motherhood and career. All the women were employed, volunteered with community organizations, and/or were attending post-secondary. These women held a sense of pride in their careers and volunteerism with some describing a strong identification to these aspects of themselves:

> And then I just started off part time from that and then I just recently got full time this year. It's very busy…Yeah, it's not too bad trying to help and figure out what we're doing with the [community initiative] (Participant 5).

As such, entry into motherhood within LDC included some sense of grief and loss and adaptation as they shifted from a more public, career focused life to a private, domestic sphere focused on child rearing. Maternity leave was particularly challenging for some of the women. This challenge was unexpected for many and forced them to re-evaluate how they understood themselves in the context of motherhood and LDC. Some indicated they functioned better in the family system as a working parent as they built awareness of former expectations around motherhood and found balance through reconnection to their career:

> I am a much better working mom [Laughter]. I, ah, I, ah, had this idea in my head when I was growing up, that I would, you know, like bake muffins and wait for the kids to come home from school and tidy the house and. And that's what my mom did (Participant 3).

> [S]ome, everybody like, especially in the first couple weeks, are like 'Oh, my god! How was it? How was it?' Um like thinking it's going to be a horrible thing [to return to work] and I'm like 'See yah!' [to mat leave] [Laughter] I get to go to work and stare at a computer for 6 hours. Yeah!' And I take the little dog with me too so I get, you know, it gets me out of the office every day and at lunch time he gets his little walk and we go for coffee and then I can walk down the street without two kids or pushing a stroller and it's fantastic and I then I get my time with the [children] in the morning and at the end of the day. It's a good balance. I like it. [Laughter] (Participant 2).

Regaining access to their careers supported a sense of completeness and reconnection to a former self. While for another participant, she struggled with a return to work from maternity leave after she had worked tirelessly to build her life as a confident stay-at-home parent. In describing the struggle with maternity leave, Participants 2 and 3 indicated a sense of feeling obligated to enjoy maternity leave and perform differently than they did in this role:

> You know I expected myself to have far more patience and to enjoy being home, like on my maternity leave, a lot more than I actually did. You know, and when I was home alone with the [children], like sometimes it was just, like I'd get to the, about two days before [my hubby] would come home again and I'd be like 'I can't do it. I can't do it anymore'. [Laughter]… Um, I think that was one of the things that bothered me about on maternity leave was like being that stay at home mom type, and, I don't know, I worked really hard for a lot of years to, to do more with my life. [Laughter] (Participant 2).

> I went absolutely nuts. I mean, like, I love my kids but maternity leave was the hardest thing ever. I did, I didn't have enough interaction with adults, I didn't, like it was really hard for me. Um, I didn't have anything like post-partum or like anything like that, like it was just, I felt so tied down to the house. That I, that I didn't see outside the four walls nearly enough. And, all of that was just too much that I really liked going back to work….Yeah, they were just past 11 months when I went back to work. So they were almost a year old (Participant 3).

Finishing maternity leave was highly anticipated and provided an opportunity for the women to reconnect with their public life, a highly valued career, and a sense of self outside of being a mother or wife. In particular, Participant 2 rejected the identity of a "stay at home type" suggesting a need for a balanced sense of self in the context of being a highly educated career woman who shifts into motherhood. As such, a return to work was an invaluable opportunity for her to return to her former self, which brought her a sense of balance and relief. A reconnection with their careers supported the women to sustain them in LDC. Participant 2 also indicated some struggle had taken place as she reconciled her identity and acceptance of a new normal as a mother and career woman:

> I was surprised by how much I didn't like being home with them all the time

> when I was on maternity leave. Um, just, because it was the same damn thing every single day. [Laughter]. It was like, [Laughter], and you know by 3:00pm, it's like, I'm tired of playing with legos [laughter]. You know, but, yeah, with them in daycare, I find it a lot easier, and, so i-, so it's never as hard as I think it's gonna be (Participant 2).

She went on to articulate her connection to her career as divergent from the cultural norm she notices in the community. This related to her experience migrating to the community and sensing a divergent sense of self to the local cultural norms:

> I've got a career that I worked a long time to develop. I see a lot of people, especially in this town, where it's like, the cost of livings a little bit less so a family can get by on one income so when I first moved here, I didn't know very many people. Men went out and got a job, were sometimes, were often, even though they had similar education or something, like the men went out and got a good job and the women stayed home…But, I think, like, some of the other moms that I've resonated the most with from, like, my prenatal class and stuff like that, they're in the same boat as me. Like they're, they're older, they're more highly educated, and ugh, and probably in the long term they're the ones that, I'll form better relationships with, you know (Participant 2).

Conversely, Participant 1 found returning to work from maternity leave a "heartbreaking" experience. Adapting to motherhood required substantial emotional, cognitive, and physical energy; it was a significant life change. Therefore, returning to work presented as another, significant shift after all of the energy she invested in adapting to being a stay at home mom. She enjoyed time with her baby, the flexibility of her schedule, and having the opportunity to connect with other moms. At the end of maternity leave, she was aligned more with her identity as a stay-at-home mother and to an extent is rejecting her career self:

> I may not have needed as much. If he had been home or maybe I would have been able to go longer without getting that help [for post-partum depression]. I might still have needed it in the end. But I might have been able to go longer without it. Um, and things may not have gone, things wouldn't have gone exactly the same road that they did if he was home all the time. It probably wouldn't be as devastating for me to think about him being away, [the baby] being in daycare, me having to be at work. Right, like there's, there's a whole bunch of things associated with that, that if he was home, that he could regularly help with the morning routine every morning and we could go through everything together

(Participant 1).

Her return to work is compelled, in part, to have extended work benefits for her family, which are not offered at her husband's work. The process of returning to work was further challenging as she coupled this with thoughts of her partner being away from home. She stated this context has contributed, in part, to her post-partum depression symptoms. In comparison, she described her husband having maintained a steady work life throughout the experience of becoming a parent. She sensed having experienced the most significant adaptation between them. This could contributed to a sense of distinct life worlds or feelings of frustration and resentment with her partner. Participant 1 prepared herself and the baby for the adjustment to her return to work by easing into a daycare schedule and returning to part-time work. She also sought out therapy.

The women's access to employment was facilitated entirely by childcare, paid or unpaid. Some women who worked in sporadic, casual employment indicated they were able to more consistently access employment when their partner was back from camp. Others indicated an easier workday schedule when the partner was home:

> I need to be really organized with my schedule and then like a network of babysitters as well because my job is typically evenings and weekends, which means that, um, I also have to schedule the kids into the middle of my day to make sure they're still bonded with one of their parents' (Participant 3).

> But, um, when he's home and they call me … and say we need somebody…, it's like, 'Well [my hubby's] home. I can go'. It's a little easier, I can just kind of get up and go. Um, so, that's nicer. That I don't have to worry about childcare. But that's only half the month, right. Half the month I have the luxury, half the month I don't. So it's kind of, I think it's annoying for them, but they understand (Participant 6).

Child caring and support with domestic labour created opportunity for the women to engage in a public, career life and explore who they were outside of their roles as wife and mother. Participant 3 made use of paid labour for childcare and domestic duties. Paid labour allowed her

to balance her career and parenting duties thus creating time for her to spend engaging in quality activities and connection with her children. This also mitigated her sense of being a "single mom" in the LDC lifestyle in that she was not burdened with workload.

Access to childcare was problematic for the women. Five of the six women interviewed indicated there was a dearth of childcare in their communities. Some women indicated that they could not work as much as they would like due to the childcare availability barrier:

> Like that's the biggest thing when I work I need, I need childcare. Yeah, and not to bash the community but it's hard to find childcare outside of family…And I've talked to a couple different people, like, there's um, a few um, [coworkers] there, that, you know, talk about having kids, they're young and they're, you know, married or with somebody that they love, whatever. And I sai-, I just, I told them, said that that's like the hardest thing for me is childcare. If I had childcare readily available I would be here all the time. You know that's the main thing, is childcare (Participant 6).

> So, there needs to be a lot of controls, but, you know, government funding would makes things so much better [Laughter]. And guarantees of daycare spaces for, you know, the number of kids I think there are probably a lot of stay at homes who would rather not be stay at home moms (Participant 2).

Participant 6 obtained a second, lower-paying job to her career job just so she could access employment within normal daycare hours:

> So it's a little harder to find somebody that's gonna watch your, your 2 year old for, you know, 14 hours a day essentially, right? So, um, that's a little trickier, but I have, like I said, I have the grandmothers that help me a lot when I do wanna work. And, I, ugh, yeah, it's just, it's just childcare. Around here it's childcare is really hard to come by. Yeah, for [my career job] it's kind of almost impossible because they're such long shifts. Daycares aren't usually open at 6:30am in the morning and they don't go on until 7:30pm at night. So, you know you have to rely, if you don't have people that are gonna watch your kid then you can't really do it unless you have a schedule ahead of time, right. Yeah, so that's tricky. And I'd like, I'd like to essentially just [do my career job], like I, I could give up the (9-4pm) job... It's not gonna kill me, but I mean the hours, like, you know. I just can't find someone to watch my kid for that long. You know, and unless I'm paying them good money, right? And then it's like, 'Well why am I working if I'm just giving them my pay cheque?' What's the point? [Laughter] (Participant 6).

The women indicated that their communities need childcare and other child-focused services to be more reflective of working moms' schedules:

> I would like more things on weekends, like more things to take the [children] to. Um, you know, I didn't , I didn't take the [children] to Strong Start until like December for the first time just because it was so hard to get out of the house with them on my own and I just never, we just never got around to it when [my hubby] was home and, I finally took them to Strong Start and I was like, man, I wish were not going back to work so I could take them here more often [Laughter]… But, ugh, it would be nice to have something like that that's on the weekend and, and ugh, just more places to take one year old [children] to, you know, run around [Laughter] (Participant 2).

> Um, and things like Strong Start are only available during, you know, 9am-12:00pm and so it's all during working, business hours. And I can't ever take the kids to those things (Participant 3).

Engagement with their careers met the personal goals of the women and sustained them in LDC. It allowed some of the women to feel like better mothers than if they were a stay-at-home mom. However, it was mediated by their husbands' absence and work, which limited their access to his childcare. Furthermore, the limited childcare services in community mediated their access to day care and other child supports.

Gender roles. Women had various experiences and understanding of gender roles in this study. Traditional gender roles sustained many of the families in the LDC context; in particular, this was in terms of the role division and labour. While some women were reluctant to accept traditional gender roles they acknowledged their inevitability to sustain the lifestyle with their families. Other women rejected the notion that traditional gender roles are problematic describing them as natural, normal, and their choice. They described a comfort in segregating "pink and blue" jobs. Another woman indicated that she was not impacted by traditional gender roles as her husband is fully integrated into domestic labour on furlough. One participant experienced fluidity in gender roles.

Participants 4 and 5 indicated that traditional gender role expectations had no bearing on their experiences with their partners in LDC. They attributed this to their partners' engagement in domestic duties on his return home and the nature of their relationship: the husbands were not demanding of the wives. Participant 4's partner had supported her financially since the outset of their relationship a decade ago. As a couple they were loving, stable, supportive, confident, and worked as a team. Her greatest emphasis on having equalized gender roles in her relationship centred on their shared domestic labour:

> So I don't really feel defined by my gender. Like, yeah, it's just my life and my husband treats me as an equal not as just his wife. I'm an equal person to him. [W]e, we, even take turns with things that we do with her. We alternate mornings on who's gonna get up. But when he's gone, I'm the only one, obviously, to get up with her, so then I don't get that day of, just sleeping or hanging out, not having to get up and get the cereal and stuff like that. But when he's gone obviously it's all up to me… But then, even with bath time, whoever washes her hair, her body doesn't have to get her dressed (Participant 4).

She also stated her husband's relaxed and supportive approach to her demonstrates non-problematic gender roles:

> [L]ike, he's not the guy who sits on the couch and orders me around. [Laughter]. Um, yeah, we just share everything… Um, just like my husband will do anything for myself for my [child], like anything if I ask he will usually go out of his way to make sure that we are happy and I don't see that in a lot of relationships (Participant 4).

She highly valued the giving, supportive, respectful nature of her husband and stated he provides her space to make decisions and have the freedom to do as she wishes:

> He um, he wasn't always so letting me go run free. But I think we've both grown up so much just in the past 3 years with our [child]. That he is like, um, 'Nothing to worry about. Like I know you're coming home at night' (Participant 4).

This was also exceptional to the norm she sees in other couples. She indicated despite the challenges, such as the significant loneliness with his return to camp, associated with the lifestyle, it was worthwhile. It is worth noting that her discourse regarding autonomy is linked to

her seeking out acceptance and him sanctioning it: "letting me", "running free", and "being allowed" to engage in activities. However, the stability and strength of their relationship supports their maintenance of the LDC lifestyle.

Participant 5 stated she worked when the baby was young and the father remained at home to care for the baby. She also almost decided to work in camp instead of her husband, who would have then stayed at home to take care of the baby. She was comfortable performing non-traditional jobs, such as trades-style work, which she was taught to do by her father. However, she shared that at this time she would rather be close to her daughter, which would negatively influence a future decision to work in town vis-à-vis camp:

> Um, it [impact of traditional gender roles] hasn't really come up for, like life choices… Cause before I started working on, at my current job I took at course that was, it was mainly working for getting tickets and stuff for camp jobs or whatever and we did a trades part (Participant 5).

As such, she does not experience LDC as limiting in terms of gender. She also observed women going to camp instead of their husbands with the husband remaining in community with the children. However, she found her daily life as differing from many camp wives in the community who were housewives who choose to stay home because they have more children to raise and are focused on doing so themselves:

> Most of the typical ones, like, a lot of them that, a lot of the ones that I know have a lot more kids and sometime, some of them don't work because their husbands are making a lot more money so…And I think it just gives them time to be with their kids cause they have more kids (Participant 5).

She also indicated camp wives have the choice to remain at home as their husband/partner's income is sufficient to support the family unit. She supported women's choice to remain at home. Participants 1 and 2 described themselves as reluctantly falling into traditional gender roles. However, they realize its importance to maintain LDC:

> So I've kind of fallen into like the traditional gender role, of like, being the cook and the,

> he does a lot of the cleaning, I'll give it, I'll give him that when he gets home. You know, and, cleaning is kind of divided up. And sometimes I feel like, um, I'm not being a feminist or whatever by doing all this stuff. But, like, at the same time, like I kind of want to do it too. Like, I wanna, I want my kids to have a certain lifestyle, you know (Participant 2).

> Um, and I think the younger generation, you know sort of our age, is we want to have it all together but at the same time, I'm not content to let [my hubby] go out and have all the fun with splitting fire wood for instance... Um, and it's like he's try-, he tries at times to kind of push the traditional role which I think might actually work better with camp life in some respects (Participant 1).

For Participant 2, this related to her husband's inability to earn pay in the community as high as her own. Participant 1 believed following some traditional gender roles supports the lifestyle. She supported this belief by comparing herself to other women with more time in LDC and who had successful relationships and families:

> [S]he and her husband have been in the game for years doing it. So they've got that comfort around it and it seems like, that little bit older generation, they've got this comfort that it's like 'No you can go away and it's fine whatever, were fine'. Like they've figured out they've got one place that they live, they have a routine that they live when they're home, and, ugh, their chores are very segregated. He does wood, she does fires (Participant 1).

She also described the gendered nature of camp "wife" as a woman's role was associated with experiences of social pressure:

> Like the idea that I stay and manage household, isn't questioned. My family doesn't question it, [his] family doesn't question it, the community doesn't question it. But if it was reversed and I was going in to camp for two weeks and leaving him at home with [the baby], I think there would be questions raised (Participant 1).

She had a tenuousness understanding of traditional gender roles as she both accepted them for her current context while also rallied against the notion that younger generations should be relegated to traditional roles:

> But yeah, being coupled and with a kid, it's like no, I kind of feel like that's my thing [stay at home and raise the child and manage the household] to do. In a way that I hope she doesn't feel when she grows up. Um, like, that she would have the

> option if she wanted to. If she was in a similar situation, but she, that she didn't have to. That she never felt obligated to (Participant 1).

Participant 3 also had a push-pull relationship with gender roles. She at once accepted them, indicating she was comfortable with a division of "pink" and "blue" jobs yet also asserted her independence in decision-making and control over the family household:

> I am not afraid to divide pink jobs and blue jobs in my house [Laughter]. I know there've been time-, like I feel like [my hubby] should mow the lawn. Like, I don't want to do that [Laughter]. So, I did have to learn how to mow the lawn when it got out of control, until again that's like another person that I ended up hiring cause it takes an hour and a half, I don't want to do it (Participant 3).

She held power and control in the domestic realm and asserted this to husband. Some role negotiation with her husband had taken place regarding her leadership over household:

> I think that, you know, sometimes, especially initially [my hubby] really just wished he would just say something and I would just make it happen. [Laughter]…Uh, w-, that's what his hope was. [Laughter]. And, ugh, and that was part of like, I guess, us ending up working things out to, you know, the state that it, I mean, not at all, you know. 100% all the time great, but we a-, we at least function somewhat cohesively now… Um, and I think that part of it was, was acknowledged exactly how much work it is to be a, the full time parent, which, like, he only tested the waters every, you know, 4th week (Participant 3).

As her husband attempted to instate himself as household leader and decision maker on child rearing she re-asserted her leadership in this domain. Obtaining his empathy and understanding of her workload was integral to this:

> [B]ut, w-, when it was left up to him to, I mean, I, I was working, and I was taking some classes, and I was managing all of the kids schedule, and the house. And he was at home just trying to keep up with laundry and making three meals a day and having some snacks available for the kids, and he was like, pooped. [Laughter] (Participant 3).

Participant 6 has a sense of decisiveness and assuredness about gender roles in her family unit. She felt comfortable with a natural division of labour through traditional roles because she described having agency to make this decision. This was facilitated in part by her strong sense

of duty to her family unit, "Like I, I make it work for us" (Participant 6). She portrayed confidence and choice in terms of her decision to take on primary responsibility for the family's domestic world and child caring duties:

> I'm perfectly happy doing the things that I do. So, for me, I'm Ok having the household chores of 'a woman'. You know what I mean, like I'm happy to do the dishes, I'm happy to do the laundry, I'm happy to do the childrearing, I'm happy to do all that stuff. And I think that makes a big difference for camp wives (Participant 6).

Her sense of comfort and success in LDC is attributed to having a distinct, discrete idea of who was responsible for which roles. It was a natural and unspoken norm in their relationship, "[L]ike I said before, me and [my hubby] never really talked about what we expect the other to do kind of thing. We kinda just do what we do. I don't know if that makes any kind of sense?" This division of labour was beneficial for the success of her family and also supports the well-being of her partner:

> I know some women who, it's like a, it's like a 50/50, so 'You're the wife, you're the husband. I'm going to do half of everything, you do half of everything else' you know what I mean? So, you know, there's some women who 'I'll do the laundry but I'm not doing the dishes' or 'I'll clean the kitchen but I'm not doing the bathroom'. So, their husband would have to do that. But for me that's, that's I don't mind doing all of it…And that works for us because, you know, I appreciate that he's gone for two weeks and he's tired from working so much so I'm happy to just do it all the time…You know…So, I think that makes a big difference in who you are and what your expectations are (Participant 6).

However, she also described balancing herself in this context through her access to her career. She highly valued her education and career as an individual:

> Well the idea is for me [sigh] is that, well I'd like to further my, like I'd like to finish my degree…And, and, you know, be a [degree holder in my profession]. Just for me. Not for, you know, not just for my kids not just for my like, that's what I want to do (Participant 6).

It is a personal goal, which she mediated against societal notions of what she should or should not do as woman, wife, and mother:

> And he [her father] thinks that like, I don't agree with him, but he thinks that women should be barefoot and pregnant in the kitchen and I'm, you know, 'I don't mind being barefoot, don't mind being pregnant, don't mind being in the kitchen, but that's not all I'm gonna do. You know, like, I'm gonna, you know, eventually I'll finish my degree and I wanna work'. Then I have like my mom and her sisters...and they're kind of like, they're feministy. They're like 'Women are equal to men and, and women can do everything a man can do blah blah blah'. So, for me, it's like I have all these different ranges of things that people expect and think and whatever and it's just like, I'll, I kinda pick and choose what I want (Participant 6).

She balanced this context by asserting the importance of her career in addition to carrying out these roles. She even imagined a future where she further upgraded her education and could work while her husband remained at home.

In this study, women held various understandings of and experiences with gender roles. Overall, traditional gender roles and women's work sustained the family in LDC. As such, although some women were reluctant to accept traditional gender roles they acknowledged it was necessary and inevitable. Importantly, some women rejected the notion that traditional gender roles are problematic and asserted them as normal but also a personal choice.

In terms of identity and roles, women in the study held the vital role of family nucleus. They functioned as the central point of organization, coordination, and maintenance of the family unit through assessing and supporting the family unit. The women's families were maintained and their overall well-being in LDC was supported by the women holding this role. In this context, many of the women described a shifting sense of self as they moved from public, career worlds to private, domestic selves as mothers. Half of the women indicated they felt a sense of relief at the end of maternity leave; they had the opportunity to re-engage with their former career selves. In this context, women negotiated their understanding of and experience within gender roles.

The women in this study described their life worlds in the LDC context as they relate to the camp context changing over time. In particular, LDC is experienced as an external, mediation force that included migration, normalizing camp life, camp culture, and a future in LDC. Furthermore, the work/furlough camp schedule resulted in women having varying schedules whether their partner was in or out of camp. Adaptation to the lifestyle took place at entry into and again as mothers in LDC. The children's adaptation to LDC was also pertinent to the women. Women described new and negotiated roles in the LDC lifestyle relating being the nucleus of the family and shifting roles as career women and mothers. The women also faced the implications of gender roles and personal sacrifice to maintain the lifestyle. In time women had a sense of living in separate life worlds to their husbands. A future in LDC is highly plausible for the women as they see the financial benefit to camp work. They also noted limited other employment options for working class labourers in the region. To follow is further discussion on the study's findings.

Chapter Five: Discussion

The research findings chapter shed light on the lived experiences of camp wives in northwestern BC. To further build an understanding of their experiences, to follow is a discussion of the study's major research findings and their meaning. The findings are related to similar studies, such as those discussed in the literature review. Furthermore, the research findings are also interpreted through the study's theoretical lenses: feminist, critical, and ecological systems theories. The discussion provides recommendations based on the findings. The study's limitations are then provided below.

Major Findings

Through the research four thematic categories emerged, which provide insight into both the manifest and latent aspects of the women's experiences as camp wives with young children: camp lifestyle over time, camp schedule, adaptation, and identity and roles. These categories of experience are not discreet, but rather intersecting and interrelated. The women in this study experienced camp life as an evolving context that is shaped by time. Participants understood LDC as an external, uncontrollable force that shaped their lives, however, they adjusted and adapted within this context to create choice for both themselves and their families. For example, women who had experiences migrating for their husbands' LDC employment were able to choose to settle in their current community of residence so as to obtain stability and comfort in the LDC lifestyle. Women's experiences living in the LDC lifestyle were also shaped by migration, camp culture, the age of their children, their relationship with and support from their partners, adaptation and coping processes and strategies, and access to both informal and formal support. In this process, women identified varied (shifting) roles.

A majority of the women described an initial adjustment to LDC prior to having children. This adjustment involved preparation for and normalization of the LDC lifestyle. While some women learned about the experiences of existing camp wives to inform their decision to enter the lifestyle others indicated that they entered the lifestyle without much thought. One woman described having confidence with the LDC lifestyle as she was an LDC worker for years. Initial adjustment centred on building an understanding of the camp schedule and transportation as well as learning to be away from their partners for the first time. This was a highly challenging experience for four of the six participants, which brought about loneliness and fear. However, all of the women accepted the LDC lifestyle as a permanent and unchanging way of life for them as a resource sector norm. They understood there was no other alternative, high paying employment in the region for their partners outside of camp employment. Camp was normalized as a way of life as the women saw it as the predominant form of labour organization in their communities. Half of the women accepted LDC as a way of life as they were inter-generationally embedded in the lifestyle: their grandfathers, fathers, and now husbands worked in camp. The women in the study normalized camp life as unchangeable, beneficial, and connected to their identity.

Women have differing routines and daily life depending on their husbands' work rotation/furlough schedule. In this study, the men's rotation schedules varied: some worked three to four weeks in camp with a one-week furlough and others worked two weeks in and one week out. With their husbands in camp, a majority of the women indicated feeling burdened to independently manage the workload of a family and household. In time, however, they engaged in adaptive strategies to support this by accessing: paid and unpaid child care, paid household labour, triaging tasks for their husband to complete at his return, learning to do their husbands' tasks, establishing a routine, and connecting with their social network and family to stave off

loneliness. Half of the women shared that they enjoyed having control and autonomy over the household. They developed a sense of self-efficacy and pride in their ability to manage alone; they appreciated, however, appraisal from their partners for their hard work and skills in this regard. The husbands' return from camp was met with excitement, anticipation, and also challenges and frustration in re-integrating him into the routine. Women described an adjustment period at their husband's return from camp. All of the women described their husbands needing to decompress after being in camp by "shaking off" camp culture, catching up on sleep, and having time alone for the first couple of days home. One woman required her husband take a buffer day off prior to returning home from camp. A majority of the women accepted their husbands' need to adapt back to home life. Role negotiation and mediating parenting styles were indicative of the reintegration of their husbands. The women often planned for their husbands' return and adapted their routines to support him and his connection to the children. With their husbands at home, women had the opportunity to access their social network, work more in paid employment, or attend needed appointments. Although some women experienced sadness with their husbands' departure back to camp others felt a sense of relief as they could re-start their self-directed, independent schedule and regain access to a highly valuable social network of other mothers.

Women support the family's maintenance of LDC by assessing and strategizing to sustain the family's well-being, even at the expense of their own wellness. Women place their domestic relationship, psychosocial stressor debriefing, and workload needs secondary to the needs of their children and the husbands' in order to sustain the family. The women struggled with shifting to the mother role; they adapted in time through the support of formal services, other mothers, and the grandparents. In time they gained a sense of confidence and self-efficacy as

new mothers in LDC. Importantly, adjusting to motherhood resulted in many of the women re-evaluating their comfort in LDC; it required another process of adaptation to LDC despite previously feeling settled and confident in it. Women who migrated to their communities were particularly reliant on formal services to meet other new mothers, learn to parent, and gain access to childcare and household labour. At least half of the participants described challenges with maternity leave as they felt alienated from a former public and career life. Returning to work from maternity leave was viewed as highly anticipated to most of the women as it provided an opportunity to reclaim a former sense of self. Yet two women did not have this experience with maternity with one in particular indicating a significant challenge in shifting back to her job after she worked tirelessly to build comfort and confidence as a stay-at-home mother. The women's children also adapted to LDC; the children's adaptation to LDC was dependent on their developmental stage. As the children got older, they gained an increased awareness of their father's schedule and absences. Women assessed and support the adaptation needs of the children. Women experienced parenting disparately from their partners. Some women accommodated this struggle by diligently maintaining communication between their husbands and the children and teaching their partners about the children's developmental and parenting needs. While others described sharing the parenting experience with other mothers and the grandmothers more than their husbands; it was important to them to have a shared parenting experience.

In time, women in LDC can build a sense of living in separate life worlds to their husbands. As their lives centre more on managing the household and childcare than their partners, women build a sense of self-efficacy in this context. They gain a sense of power, control, and agency in the domestic space; they own and control this space. For some women in

this study, they identified their husbands as not understanding the extent of or being capable of fulfilling the women's work at home. However, it is worth noting the women's sense of agency within the domestic realm was associated with a notion that their partners' work in camp was more highly valued than their own. At times being in the domestic sphere was described as invalidating, and mundane, particularly for women who highly valued their investment in their education and careers.

Traditional gender roles sustained many of the families in the LDC lifestyle. The women had various experiences and understanding of gender roles as camp wives. In particular, this was through the division of roles and labour. Half of the women were reluctant to accept traditional gender roles; however, they acknowledged the inevitability traditional gender roles in order to sustain the lifestyle with their families. The other three women rejected the notion that traditional gender roles are problematic. They described them as natural, normal, and their choice. One woman indicated that she was not impacted by traditional gender roles as her husband is fully integrated into domestic labour on furlough. One participant described experiencing fluidity in gender roles as she indicated she almost went to camp to work instead of her husband. In this context, one participant described the gendered nature of camp "wife" as a woman's role, which was associated to experiences with social pressure. A tenuousness with traditional gender roles results in a push-pull relationship with them. One woman at once accepted them, indicating she is comfortable with a division of "pink" and "blue" jobs yet also asserted her independence in decision-making and control over the family household vis-à-vis her husband. Yet another woman indicated that comfort and success in LDC is attributed to having a distinct, discrete idea of who is responsible for which roles. It is a natural and unspoken norm in their relationship.

In consideration of the future of their children in LDC, the participants considered both the challenges and benefits they see to camp work. In terms of challenges, women had concerns with communication infrastructure, the boom and bust nature of resource extraction, and personal-political conflicts with the environmental impact and First Nations land rights' implications associated with resource extraction. Camp culture can also be problematic. The negative aspects of camp culture include hyper-masculinity; domestic relationship problems, such as jealousy; financial irresponsibility; and partying. A majority of the women either observed or personally experienced the impacts of it. It is worth noting, however, that there are positive aspects of camp culture. The positive aspects of camp culture were experienced by the men, and included: a sense of community and belonging as well as opportunities to learn about new professions. The women strove to distance themselves from the negative aspects of camp culture: isolating it as external to themselves (its other people's problems), mitigating its impact through a process of reducing cognitive dissonance by rationalizing and accepting it, as well as engaging in positive thinking and avoidance. The benefits of camp included an increased income, concentrated time together at furlough, the husbands' opportunity to learn a new trade or practice his vocation, and the husbands' gaining a sense of well-being through increased confidence as a high earner. Doubts about a future in LDC relate to having more children. Some women in this study had concerns about managing more of them alone. Other mothers indicated concern about parenting alone when their children reach their teenage years. In total, the women found that LDC's benefits outweigh its costs. This was particularly tied to a lack of alternative employment in the region. However, it is important to recognize that the women's adaptive processes, such as positive thinking and normalization of the lifestyle contribute to their resilience and maintenance of the lifestyle. Furthermore, a strong relationship with one's partner

is necessary to maintain LDC. To follow is an interpretation of the findings as it relates to similar studies discussed in the literature review.

Related Research

Whalen's (2013) study on the experiences of women in Newfoundland whose partners work in the Alberta oil sands is a relevant current source to discuss this study's findings. Gallegos (2006), Goldenberg (2008), Hubinger et al., (2002), Sibbel (2010), and Watts (2004) are also important studies on the LDC employment context as it impacts workers, the families, and communities. Findings from these studies are used as a basis for comparing and contrasting this study's results.

In Whalen's (2013) study, the author also found that the women had an increased workload compared to the women in this study, often taking on their male partner's work. Gallegos (2006) found that men would compensate for this by taking on additional housekeeping and child-minding duties on their furlough. While in this study more than half of the men provided support with child minding most of the women did not indicate increased support with housekeeping duties. There was a notable exception of one participant who highly valued the intensive support she received from her husband during his furlough and off-season with household chores and child raising. The women primarily viewed furlough as an opportunity to reconnect with the children and also decompress after their hard work in camp. Most of the women sought to gain recognition from their partners for their hard work and sacrifice as the stay-at-home parents. Similarly to Gallegos (2006) and Whalen (2013), women in this study stated that while their husbands were away in camp they gained support with their workload and sense of loneliness from their social network. Particular to this study, women's support centred

on receiving child care, education on parenting from grandparents and paid services; connecting with other mothers to share common experiences was highly valued for some.

Goldenberg et al., (2008) and Sibbel (2010) touched on some of the negative and positive aspects of camp life for male workers. The authors indicated concerns with hyper-masculine environments, apathy for self-care, sexism, limited activities in camp, and concerns with drugs and alcohol in camp. Positive aspects included increased pay, meeting likeminded friends and coworkers, not having to cook or clean and gaining access to new, exciting life experiences. Although this study did not focus on the experiences of the male LDC working partners, the women echoed experiences with similarities regarding their experience with or observation of camp culture. In particular, women in both studies shared concerns regarding hyper-masculinity and partying in camp. They also described similar benefits to camp culture, such as the men finding likeminded friends and coworkers in camp. Additionally, women in this study resoundingly described the benefit of increased pay with camp work. Novel to this study were the women's lengthy discussion on the challenges associated with unhealthy relationships with limited trust, jealousy, cheating, and couples struggling to be apart from one another.

Watts (2004) described stages of adaptation men typically experience as they start a career in LDC. The first stage lasts 1-2 months and involves a changing concept of self-identity, which includes feelings of adjustment and isolation in a new environment and dissociation from one's normal life schedule; as though one is living in two separate worlds. Furthermore, men adjust to changing emotions, relationships, and acceptance or rejection of the lifestyle. Women in this study described supporting their husbands to manage this adaptation process. One participant in particular described her husband's struggle with the first stage of adaptation. During this stage he would frequently, sometimes multiple times a day, make calls home asking

her for support: at times, even with small tasks such as problem-solving around forgetting to bring a towel with him. She encouraged him in terms of managing the finding his way around as well as integrating with pro-social peers. Another participant described supporting her husband in the next stage of changing emotions (3-4 months in) in terms of his feelings of loneliness and separation from her and the children. While other women continued to struggle with their husbands' full adaptation to and integration with LDC, they seemed more connected at times to camp friends and/or struggled to shake off camp culture at their return home. Women often functioned as the nucleus in their families guiding the health, well-being, and positive outcomes for the family members. As such, it is important to note the vital role women played in terms of supporting their partners' successful adaptation to and maintenance of LDC.

Women in this study also went through a process of adaptation to the LDC lifestyle. LDC was easier in time as the women grew confident and independent in it. Similarly to Whalen's (2013) study, women in this study experienced stress relating to their husband's initiating of LDC. However, it was not significant or insurmountable. Many of the women in this study engaged in preparatory processes to support their adjustment while those women who did not struggled the most of study participants. Women in this study may have less stress compared to Whalen's (2013) as the women in this study are geographically situated closer to their partners' work site than the women in Newfoundland with husbands in Alberta. In fact, half of the women in this study chose to migrate to their respective communities in order to live closer to their partners' camps. Women in Whalen's (2013) study lived across the country and were not as inclined to migrate to Alberta to live closer to their husbands. However, similarly to the women in Whalen's (2013) study, this study's participants also described becoming comfortable in the lifestyle in time. As such, they became more independent and confident.

The women in this study experienced another process of adaptation when they became new mothers. Adaptation centred on learning to parent, mourning the loss of consistent, shared parenting with their partners; sharing the parenting experience with the grandparents and/or other mothers more than their partner; problem-solving to mitigate workload increases; and supporting their husbands to connect with their children. However, women's concern about missed holidays and events was not a common concern for participants in this study compared with Whalen's (2013) study. In terms of the children, Gallegos (2006) found that couples were hesitant to have children in LDC. The participants in this study did not describe such a concern. Women in this study drew on family and social supports. Furthermore, some women intentionally chose their community of residence in order to support them in becoming new mothers and also provide a good environment for their children. Women noted that the developmental stage of the children impacted their understanding and response to their fathers' absence. Children had emotional and behavioral challenges, as they were old enough to understand. These findings are also in line with Hubinger et al., (2002). Novel findings in this study include the women's description of ongoing assessment and determining adaptive strategies to address the social and emotional well-being of the children to minimize concerns and foster adaptability. Furthermore, the prevalence of LDC families in their communities supported them in accepting the lifestyle for their children as a normalized context. The women indicated concern with having more children in LDC. They also expressed concern as they anticipated their children becoming teenagers. A future in LDC considers the impact of parenting teenagers alone, a common concern also described by Gallegos (2006).

Watts (2004) indicated that couples in LDC often have marital strain relating to role adjustment at the husband's return from camp. This was a source of conflict for some women in

this study. However, for other women they did not describe conflict so much as a sense of their husband being alienated at home due to his frequent absences; they lived in separate life worlds. Some participants in Whalen's (2013) study described getting additional support with household chores at their husband's furlough while others indicate the husband's sacrifice working in camp more than makes up for their limited support with household duties. Some of the women in this study echoed both these sentiments while others reluctantly accept the role of the stay-in-community partner, but understand it as necessary to maintain LDC. It is worth noting that Taylor and Simmons (2009) indicated that life changes, such as the birth of a new baby, can shine a light on rules, routines, and patterns that are problematic in relationships if they are non-amendable. Some of the women in this study continued to struggle with role negotiation as well as parenting and workload. Although uncertain at this juncture, this may be an important factor for the families as they consider a future in LDC. In Whalen (2013), participants described the high importance of communication for both their relationship and to support the children to know their father. Women in this study indicated that adequate camp communication infrastructure is vital to mediating this important factor for relationship stability. Although communication was vital to maintain their relationship to their spouse when he's in camp they placed greater emphasis on the communication needs of their children with their father. Similarly to Sibbel (2010) women in this study felt that the furlough period was too short. Women longed for more opportunity for physical and emotional intimacy with their husbands. However, women in this study indicated the importance of the furlough more in terms of their children's time and connection to their husband than their own. Women described feeling confident and independent alone at home managing the household and children. Hesitatingly, some women described looking forward to their husband's return to camp so they could get back

to their routine and for some, re-connect with a valuable social network of other moms. Women valued accessing their career and childcare at their husbands' furlough. A significant exception was one participant who had strong feelings of grief and loss at her husband's departures; this was particularly acute for her at the end of the off-season.

Women in this study echoed Sibbel (2010), Watts (2004), and Whalen (2013) in articulating the benefits associated with LDC. These include concentrated time at furlough (for the children), expanded roles for the women, increased financial security, and personal growth and coping skills. Similarly to Whalen (2013), all women in this study indicated that the challenges of LDC were surpassed by the financial benefits. In fact, financial and associated lifestyle improvement factors were the driving force behind their decision to enter LDC. For four of the six participants there was no other choice but LDC to earn this level of an income in their communities.

Theoretical Interpretation of Findings

An understanding of the findings through systems, critical, and feminist theory lenses will also bring insight into the research. Broadly speaking, feminist thought contends that patriarchy (male dominance) exists and reduces the value, roles, and opportunities of women (Tracy, 2013). As a political movement it strives to provide equity and freedom from marginalization for all women in society. Critical theory indicates that the rural, resource rich regions of northern Canada exist as disempowered and removed from industry and government decision-making, which takes place in the urban centres of the south and east of the country. As a result, resource extractive activities seek to benefit the financial gains of corporations, as supported by government policy, to the minimal long-term benefit to local communities. Local communities face a boom and bust context of alternating economic prosperity and hardship with

limited controls and supports within this structure (Collier, 2006). Systems theory is a core philosophical underpinning to social work practice. It considers the person in their environment. The women are fluidly and transactionally integrated into various systemic levels: micro-individual, friends, family, the workplace; mezzo-interactions between micro systems; exo-wider social settings, such as daycares, outreach centres, libraries, LDC camp; and macro - culture, society, and governance (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1986). The women's experiences as described by this study's findings are explored through an interrelated understanding of feminist, critical, and systems theory thought.

Women's work is often undervalued. This is particularly so in a capitalist, economic system. Some of the women in this study undervalued their care giving and unpaid domestic labour. They placed a greater emphasis on their husband's work in camp and associated need for rest at furlough. This perspective did not take into account the long, if not longer, hours the women worked daily caring for a young child, working and volunteering, and also managing the household. While the men in camp work long hours they also benefit from the labour of others for both cleaning and food preparation while they were in camp. Many women in this study gained important child caring and emotional support from family and friends or through paid labour. However, this support is contingent upon the relational, time-sensitive, and monetary factors. For example, one participant described gaining support from both her mother and mother-in-law. This support was highly valued; however, she needed to withstand relational concerns to obtain this support. A lack of affordable and available childcare is also an important consideration in this context. One participant paid other women to complete household and care giving labour so she could access her career and have quality time with her children. This

exemplifies the value of women's work. Reid (1934) provided that any productive activity that can be replaced in the market place has value.

From a feminist perspective, some women indicate a consciousness around their position within a capitalist system. They described remaining in-community to manage the household and care give for their child[ren], which resulted in their adherence to a traditional gender normative and letting go of their feminist ideals. They maintained that doing so was necessary for the family to survive in LDC. In addition, through their nurturing work, women support the LDC industry. The women aid the industry's maintenance of healthy, emotionally grounded workers through the women's therapeutic and relationship support for the men. Furthermore many women put their own interests behind the emotional and workload needs of the family, in order to sustain the lifestyle. Some offset this challenge by re-engaging with their careers at the end of maternity leave. However, some also described pressure from their husbands, families, and communities to maintain a traditional division of labour. One woman in particular discussed unvoiced expectations for her to fulfill traditional gender roles from her family and community. She indicated her remaining in community did not go questioned but the reverse would be problematic for those same systems.

Some women described a relationship with fluidity and non-constraint in gender roles. One woman explored this by sharing she almost went to camp instead of her partner; he would have remained at home with the child. She indicated he has worked throughout her child's life and is fully supported at home by her partner. She also stated that she saw women working in camp while their partners remained at home. Furthermore, she described women's decision to raise their families as a valuable and worthwhile choice. Another woman also described gender roles as non-problematic in her life world. Her husband supported her with all household duties

and child-raising when he was home. He also did not make demands of her. It is worth noting that both of these women identified as First Nations. I am reminded of the importance of women's intersectional experiences (Bishop, 2002). One participant's position as both in and out of working class also demonstrates the shifting sense of "the cultural ideals and practices that merged as part of this separation have been enacted along class and gender, as well as sexuality, race, ethnicity, and locational axes" (Marston, 2000, p. 234). This woman's experiences were mediated by acculturation as a white collar, highly educated, well-paid woman. However, as the partner to a working class man and a woman who worked with the working class she both rejected and felt the need to accept those facets of her experience and identity. Dhruvarajan and Vickers (2002) bring important perspective in that women's experiences are permeated by geographical location; placement in the global economy; communal affiliation, such as race or ethnicity; gender role expectations; and personal status, such as age, marital status, reproductive status, sexual orientation, dis/ability.

Camp work is the predominant choice for high paying employment in northwestern, rural BC for the working class. This aligns with resource extraction economy predominance in the north; there are not many other choices for work. Women described a sense of powerlessness to the needs and outcomes associated with the resource extraction sector and market forces. This echoes Clarke (2010) and Collier (2006) who described rural, resource dependent communities as existing in an oppressive, subordinated system. Most of the women recognized that the organization of and demand for their husbands' labour is directly tied to a boom-bust resource economy. Most accepted this as unchanging and with their partners developed strategies to find stability and security therein. Some chose communities close to the work site where they could build a sense of community and stability. In doing so they chose companies that they thought

could offer longer term, stable employment. Others accepted that they could not control for commodity prices and used financial planning to plan for future busts in the economy. Importantly, some women described the implications of resource extractive activity to First Nations' territories. A lack of consultation was indicated as a significant concern. They described negotiating a livelihood from corporations that failed to properly consult with their/their partners' First Nation and family members. LDC is understood as meeting industry's profit maximizing needs with workers, families, and communities disengaged from decision-making processes around how the workforce organization impacts them. Women saw themselves and their families as powerless to the resource extraction sector and its accompanying labour force organization requirements.

In summary, this study provided an intimate, fine-grained perspective on the experiences of camp wives. Camp wives are an important and understudied population who are not only significantly impacted by the LDC context but also support its sustenance. This study expands on existing research while also providing new insight on the women's lived experiences. In particular, the findings support the indication that women have an increased workload and responsibility resultant from their partners' time in camp. However, this study points to the depth of experience for the women in terms of the roles and processes women engage in within this context. The women's work is multilayered and multifunctioning. As the nucleus of the family not only did women perform instrumental, task support they also functioned as a central organizing and therapeutic force through a process of constant assessment and response to family needs. Women carry the burden of an extra workload, such as child-minding and domestic duties; however, it is worth noting that this study points to the highly valuable emotional labour and psychosocial well-being support women extend to their husbands and children. The roles and

processes women engage as the in-community partner and parent are informed by traditional gender roles. Although previous studies have pointed to more balanced experiences with gender roles in terms of labour division, this study indicates an ongoing engagement with, and to an extent consciousness regarding, the need for traditional gender roles to maintain the LDC lifestyle. More intimately, women described vacillating between choice, acceptance, and reluctance regarding traditional gender roles. As a result, women expressed tenuousness as they balanced their identity and traditional gender roles. They ameliorated this context through access to their careers and asserting their control over the domestic sphere. This was attenuated, however, by their higher valuation of their husbands' work in camp. However, the majority indicated the importance of their personal sacrifice and strength in order to sustain the family. Thus far research has not provided such an intimate perspective on the balancing act women must take on to sustain the family unit in LDC.

Children in LDC families are impacted by this employment context. Although existing research indicated that children had varied experiences according to age and time in LDC, this research points to a temporal and developmental observation of children's consciousness and adaptation to LDC. Women found their small babies did not know their father was away and then as they grew they struggled to recognize and then emotionally respond to their fathers' departure and return from camp. As they children became toddler and preschoolers they built an understanding of LDC. It is valuable to consider the important adaptive support strategies women engaged in with their young children. They facilitated their children's understanding and adjustment to the LDC lifestyle through emotional regulation and educational techniques. However, they also facilitated the father/child relationship and relating healthy child attachment to the father.

In terms of the wide context, the resource extraction industry and its use of LDC employment is pertinent to workers, their families, and communities. Camp culture has been studied, however, primarily through the lens of its impact on workers with some consideration of the impact on spousal relationships. This study supports those notions of challenging camp culture characteristics. However, it also provides insight into the coping mechanisms employed by women to address these concerns by externalizing negative aspects of camp culture as problematic for others, avoiding the negative aspects, and also supporting the spouse to reduce feelings of jealousy. A particularly pertinent aspect of the research is women's experiences as they are embedded in their families and communities. Many women have multi-generational experiences in LDC, which impacts women's negotiation and understanding of their context, and consciousness therein. Overwhelmingly, industry is seen as an indomitable. In addition, the resource extraction sector impacts the experiences of First Nations women and/or women with First Nations partners. With limited other employment opportunities women asserted a need for greater responsibility by industry to First Nations and the environment. To follow are macro, mezzo, and micro level recommendations grounded in the analysis of the findings.

Recommendations

Recommendations are at macro, mezzo, and micro levels. They draw on both my analysis and the women's suggestions. These recommendations are built on the needs women indicated as important. The recommendations also address the larger contextual issues associated with LDC and its impact on the communities.

Macro. Women require subsidized and more readily accessible childcare through the support of associated provincial government policies and program funding. This was the greatest barrier for women: finding affordable childcare available at hours they worked. One woman indicated that more women would likely work rather than stay at home, if they had access to affordable childcare. Other services needed include additional family counseling and mental health and addictions services. During my recruitment of participants I was contacted by a family who was experiencing significant marital problems associated with LDC. I believe they wished to participate in the study to gain insight into their problems and make changes therein. They did not participate in the study. However, it is worth noting that while some workers have access to company benefits, such as employee and family assistance programs (EFAP) to get paid counseling, many others do not. Women in Terrace and Hazelton noted an increase in substance use in their communities, which they attributed to LDC workers. Furthermore, in Terrace women indicated a need for more housing, as prices had increased substantially with the mining exploration and Kitimat port activity. Women in Terrace also saw increased demand on local infrastructure, such as roadways and health services. Fair share agreements between industry and communities could support communities to gain the needed funds for infrastructure development resultant form resource extraction activities. To address the boom and bust nature of the resource extraction sector, a budget stabilization account drawing on tax revenues from the extractive activities could mitigate financial hardship on communities and residents in times of bust. Alternatively, partial nationalization of resources by the Canadian government in conjunction with First Nations could support keeping the revenues generated by the extraction remain in the region.

Mezzo. Resoundingly, women expressed the importance of communication and effective communication infrastructure to maintain a relationship with their partner and support their children's connection to their father. Established mining operations or other camps could retain more employees by supporting their relationships with sufficient, quality communication infrastructure.

Women would benefit from community services for parents and children that accommodate the schedules of working moms. One woman in particular described her wish to participate in programs such as Starting Smart, however could not due to her employment schedule:

> I would like more things on weekends, like more things to take the [children] to. Um, you know, I didn't , I didn't take the boys to Strong Start until like December for the first time just because it was so hard to get out of the house with them on my own. (Participant 2).

As such, these services are predicated on the notion that women remain at home to raise children and thus have time to access these services. Women also indicated a benefit to LDC companies requiring mandatory monthly or quarterly check-ins with workers and their families regarding their psychosocial wellbeing. Furthermore, workers and their families may benefit from EFAP to access counseling. One woman, whose husband had EFAP, described accessing it as somewhat tedious. She suggests families could benefit from support to not only understand they have access to counseling via EFAP but also learn how to access this service. Support groups for women, couples, and children impacted by LDC would help them to normalize their experiences in the context of shared experience and psycho-education.

Micro. Women in the study indicated the importance of having a strong relationship to sustain LDC. In particular, it is important to have trust in the relationship. Families maintain strength as well through open communication regarding their needs and the status of their relationship. It is valuable for these women and their partners to engage in open communication and access counseling and therapy, if necessary.

Importantly, women would benefit from placing higher value on their unpaid labour. Most of the women in this study worked and or volunteered. They worked hours just as long as their partners and likely much longer and most without the benefit of housekeeping and cooked meals, which their partners receive in camp. Some indicated they would appreciate further support from their partners to share in the domestic and child workload at furlough. Some of the women may be supported to further understand their husband's work and need for a transition period upon his return.

Women benefit from having access to other services beyond childcare. They also gain support from outreach and education services where they not only learn how to parent but also gain valuable health support. One woman in this study benefited greatly from the intervention of an outreach worker who noticed she was describing post-partum depression symptoms. As such, it is valuable for women to reach out to either outreach services or their social network to avoid isolation and gain support. This is particularly true for migrant women who do not have an established network in their community. Following is discussion on the limitations of the study and the strategies I implemented to mitigate them.

Limitations

This study, as with any research endeavor, is not without limitations. Limitations are related to the nature of qualitative research and also my placement in the research. It is worth noting, however, that I strove to minimize all limitations in the study. The nature of qualitative research is such that it is subjective. Qualitative research considers the "different subjective perspectives and social backgrounds related to them" (p. 16). As such, it does not claim to produce objective, positivistic accounts of the research topic and its participants. I worked tirelessly to bring the women's truth and voices to the fore, by asking them clarifying questions in the interview and providing them with the analysis results for review and feedback. However, it is worth noting that regardless of however "rich and comprehensive, any one analysis is, [it is] inevitably, incomplete, partial, tentative, emergent, open and uncertain" (Finlay, 2008, p. 6).

Building on this notion, it is worth noting that I cannot remove myself from the research process. I was fully incorporated into its processes and analysis. I am part of it. However, I engaged in reflexivity exercises to bring forward my thoughts, feelings, values, and more than may emerge in the research process. In doing so I could come face-to-face with them, question them, and seek to understand the women's particular experiences. As a part of the reflexivity it was important for me to recognize that my background could impact the research. I shared areas of similarity to the women in the study, such as some knowledge of camp work and a working class background. However, I do not have children and have never experienced being a stay-at-home mother. I am also a feminist, which I shared with some participants and others not. In moments where I felt myself questioning the women's consciousness regarding gender roles I took a moment to reflect. I was consistently brought back to the questions: What does this experience mean to them? Why is it important? What do they gain through this experience?

What do they lose? How do they navigate themselves and their relationships in this context? I built my curiosity on their context as opposed to following the rabbit hole of judgment and doubt on their experiences.

It is also worth noting that Finlay (2008) shares that "the analysis…should by no means be read as definitive". This study is a representation of my subjective engagement with the research participants and their lived experiences in LDC. Another researcher could engage with this phenomenon and find differing results. However, every effort was made to support the women to share their her(stories). Feedback from a participant, such as "Thank you for so kindly capturing our conversation and reflecting it in your work" supports me in understanding I made every effort to achieve this end. However, this work is not complete. Importantly, this research process has illuminated other areas of research.

Directions for Future Research

Through this research project, I have gained the opportunity to thoroughly consider the lived experiences of camp wives, with children under five, in northwestern BC. I appreciated having a discrete and focused study population as it provided the opportunity to look at specific and unique lived experiences. The extensive amount of data produced in this study provided ample insight into the life worlds of these women. This research points to opportunities for further study.

At the time of the interview, women in this study were in relationships. Although some had marital relationship strains, most expressed feeling confident and secure in them; they had adapted and are resilient. Future studies may want to consider the factors impacting the failure or success of LDC relationships, either with children or without. Informally, I frequently hear of relationship breakdown in my community of Hazleton, BC as it relates to the LDC lifestyle.

Many of these relationships consist of a young couple with small children. An exploratory study could consider factors that impact the success (or not) of couples in LDC. Other relationships face strain at the husbands' discontinuation of LDC; this marks a new transition process for the women as their husband newly returns home; this topic warrants further study. Another valuable metric to consider, relating to LDC lifestyle outcomes, includes women's experience as LDC workers. Although limited within the participants in this study, one woman had extensive experience working in LDC while another spent one summer working camp, as more women are participating in camp work, it would be worthwhile to explore the impact that their experience working in camp could have on a couple and family's sustenance of the lifestyle.

In consideration of worker mobility and migration in LDC, further research might explore women's experiences in this context. Further research could expand on the variances and/or similarities in the LDC lifestyle for long-term resident northern BC camp wives and their counterparts who have migrated to the region. One woman in this study described choosing to leave her community, despite its proximity to her husband's employment, as she struggled to find a sense of belonging in the community. As such, research may wish to explore the integration processes and outcomes for women who have migrated and settled in a community. As the trend for a mobile workforce continues, how can communities support workers, spouses, and their families to build a sense of belonging and community in their new homes after they have migrated to a new community?

Building on the notion of supportive community environments, future research could explore the specific community integration and support needs required to sustain women and their families in LDC. Markey et al (2015) have initiated this conversation in terms of McKenzie, BC. However, this could be expanded to the context of northwestern BC.

Furthermore, how does a woman's access to informal and formal support services impact her health and wellness opportunities in the LDC lifestyle? For example, with limited formal (and at times informal) childcare available, how can women adequately access health and social services while their partner is in camp? This is particularly pertinent for families who have migrated to communities and do not have social supports. Again, informally I am familiar with women in Hazelton, BC who wait for their husbands to return from camp to support with childcare so they can access health and social care appointments. Study on social support network structures, functions, processes, and linkages to inform stress response and coping mechanisms would also be a valuable inquiry to expand on this topic.

Other study areas could include a focus on the impact on children and family members. A longitudinal study to measure the impact of LDC on family members over the long term would be valuable. Study on the impact of and adaptation to LDC for children at varying stages of development could provide further insight into their attachment needs and outcomes. Women in this study engaged in strategies to support their children's healthy adaptation to LDC, such as: consciously regulating their own emotions, facilitating the children's communication to their father, educating them about the camp location, and informing them on the fathers' return home time. Broader and deeper research on the healthy adaptive strategies employed by in-community parents would be valuable to inform future psychotherapeutic and/or support group services to aid LDC parents who struggle in this context. Adding to this, it is particularly interesting to me in terms of observations I have made directly at work as a family mediator. Some of the families I supported had been in LDC for a few years. The fathers worked in LDC for some years prior to finding employment in-community while the children were pre-teens. The mothers struggled to parent alone, the parents were challenged with congruent parenting approaches at the father's

return to in-community work, and the teens presented with attachment and emotional regulation concerns. Study on the impact of LDC and appropriate interventions could be beneficial to this population.

Conclusion

The foreseeable future presents ongoing use of LDC labour organization within the resource extraction context of northern BC. The implications to the women who remain in community are pertinent. Although women in this study have demonstrated great strength, resilience, and adaptability they also expressed challenges with the LDC context. In particular, an increased workload, initial loneliness, parenting and managing the household independently, while also reaching out to informal and formal supports were pertinent to the women. The women recognized that LDC is not ideal for their families. Many engaged in processes to reduce cognitive dissonance around struggles in the lifestyle: positive thinking and avoidance of challenges. They often sacrificed themselves for the betterment of their children and their husbands, ignoring many of their workload and psychosocial needs. Despite any challenges with LDC, women resoundingly accepted it as normal and unchanging in the context of available, high paying working class employment in their communities. It is worth noting the vital role these women play in not only sustaining their families but also the LDC industry. Without their caregiving support the industry would possibly face less healthy workers and higher worker turnover. Policy and program initiatives that address the needs of LDC women and their families is vital to sustain them in the lifestyle, such as: child care, access to counselling, financial management, and increased local infrastructure (roads, hospitals, for example). Women and men in LDC can maintain strength in the lifestyle through communication with each other and engaging in ongoing assessment of each individual's well-being.

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Appendix A: Interview Schedule

Women's Experiences as LDC Domestic Partner

Screening criteria

Community:

Marital status:

Partner's profession and self-identification as working class*:

Number of children and ages:

**Work class for this research means a person who grew up in a family where their parents/father had a manual or skilled trade or did other labour. It also includes having a partner who does this kind of work. This work includes, for example, being an electrician, carpenter, mechanic, driller, truck driver, general labourer, equipment operator, mine/rig worker. It includes either a worker/employee or a contractor who owns their own business and may have employees of their own. For some people, such as myself, even if you now have a "white collar" profession (like social work, nursing, office administrator) you can still identify as working class based on your family of origin and your partner's work.*

Self-disclosure

Before we arrange an appointment time to do the interview, I would like to first tell you a little about the research and myself. If you don't mind, I will quickly read to you the participant information sheet.

Warm-up and rapport building questions

i. Are you from this community? Have you lived here your whole life?

ii. Do you have family in town?

iii. May I ask how old you are? Your hubby?

iv. **For demographic purposes, may I ask if you identify as:** First Nations, Metis, Inuit, White? How do you identify yourself?

Domain 1: Camp Wife

1) I'd like to know what it's like for you as a camp "wife" but maybe first some background. Could you please give me a brief history of your relationship?

- How did you meet? How long have you been together?
- How would you describe your relationship?

2) When did he start working in camp?

- What was that decision like for the both of you?
- Why did he/you decide for him to start working in camp?
- How many years have you been in this lifestyle?

Or were you together when he first started the camp work or was he already doing camp work when you met?
- What were your thoughts on being with someone who worked in camp?
- Why did he decide to start working camp?
- How many years has he worked in camp? Have you two been in this lifestyle?

3) Could you tell me a bit about your hubby's camp work?
- What is his job?
- How long does he spend in camp for? (what's his schedule like?)
- How does he get to and from camp?
- Does he pay for travel?
- Is camp work year long? Seasonal? Do you notice a trend in the demand for his work?

4) Can you tell me a story/anecdote from when you first started into this kind of lifestyle?
prompt: Did you have uncertainties? Fears? Hope? Positives? What is the good and the bad that was going through your head?

5) How would you describe what life is like for women who stay in town while their man goes out to work for extended periods of time in camp?

6) "Who" is a "typical" camp wife, in your view?
prompt: What words come to mind? Images? Nicknames?

7) Did your perceptions of what life and the relationship would be like change after going into the relationship/he started working in camp?

8) What's it like for you when he leaves for camp? Comes home?

9) What does your hubby think about working in camp? How is it for him when he gets out of camp?
Prompt: what's his mental and emotional health like? Physical well-being?

10) How do you stay in touch while he is camp? (Skype, Facetime, telephone, email)
- How often?

What role do you think communication has in your relationship? With the children?

Domain 2: Social roles

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11) What does a typical day look like for you? (What is your day-to-day like?)
- When your hubby is at home?
- In camp?
- What's change in your daily life since he started working in camp?/You got together with him?

- Did you see any changes in your workload, roles, and responsibilities with the onset of this lifestyle?
- If you've been doing it for a while, have you seen any adjustments over time? Can you please describe those?
- Do you think any of these experiences are related to you being a woman? And traditional ideas of women's roles and men's roles? What do you think about that?

12) Are you currently employed?
- Where are you employed? Or if you stopped working, when did you stop?
- What's this like for you?

13) What changed in your life once your hubby started working in camp or you started dating a camp working man?
Prompt: Have your roles, responsibilities, or duties changed? The things you do at home or in your day-to-day life?

14) Can you tell me about your social life?
- When your hubby is in camp?
- When he is at home?

Prompt: Do you hang out with your friends or family when your hubby is in camp? What's that like? What do you do? How about when he is at home?

15) Do you volunteer or help out in the community? With your family or social network?
prompt: Formal volunteering and/or informal volunteering? Community organizations? Do you help yoru family and/or neighbours when they are in need? How often? What do you do?

16) Can you tell me about the activities you do (for fun, hobbies)?

17) Do you ever need support, either through family/friends/neighbours or actual services?
- What does support mean to you?
- Has that changed at all with your hubby being in camp?
- Who do you get most of your support from family? Friends?
- Do you access any services? Do you think you would access those services if your hubby worked in town?

Domain 3: Children

18) What's it like with your hubby working in camp now/once you had children?
- Has anything changed for you?
- What are the challenges?
- The positives?
- How has the relationship changed?
- Has your workload, duties, and responsibilities changed? How so?

19) How is it for the kids with their dad working in camp?
- How do they adjust to his departure?
- His return?

- Do you have any concerns about this lifestyle and the children?
- What are the positives of this lifestyle for the children?
- Have you seen a process of adaptation for the children? How is this related to their age, do you think? (i.e. is there a difference from when your child(ren) were newly born and their age now?)

20) As they get older, how do you see life change for them? For you?
21) Has your relationship with your spouse changed since you've had children?

Domain 4: Industry and Government

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22) What do you think about camp work? About this lifestyle?
- Is it a means to an end? Do think about him working at home?

23) What are your thoughts on the company your hubby works for?
- What do they do well? What could be done better?

24) What is your perception of the industry (mining/forestry/gas)?
- Historically? Currently?

25) Do you think the government has a role or say in how these sectors are managed?
- How the companies work?
- Is there anything the government should do differently?

Domain 5: Community

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26) From what you've seen in your community, are there a lot of couples like you where the partner works in camp?

27) Has this kind of work style changed the community at all? Does this employment style impact the community at all?
prompt: What has changed? For the good? The bad? Or neutral?

28) Is there anything you see the community as lacking? Needing? Or benefiting from having people working in camp?
prompt: What needs to happen, in your opinion? How is that directly related to LDC employment?

29)Are there any community services you think would be useful? Why?
prompt: Are any of these related to LDC employment?

Domain 1: Camp Wife and Gender Identity (part 2)

So I know we've covered a lot of areas, but if you don't mind I'd just like to revisit a bit what it's like for you as someone in this lifestyle, but more specifically as a woman in this lifestyle.

30) Of all the experiences you've shared with me so far, do you think any of this is shaped by you being a woman?

- Do you think there are any expectations, whether for yourself, in your relationship, in your family, or in society/the community you have to fulfill certain duties or roles?
- What are your thoughts on this? What works? What doesn't? What would you change, if anything?

31) If we could imagine for a moment that you were the one working in camp and your hubby was at home, what would that be like?

- What would be different? Similar? Why?

Thank you very much for your time! You've shared a lot today and I'm grateful. As we discussed, if you don't mind I'd love to keep in touch with you, at your convenience, just to follow up and make sure I am understanding and interpreting correctly what you've shared with me. If you have any questions or concerns do not hesitate to contact me. My number is 250-842-XXXX.

Appendix B: Participant Information Letter and Consent Form

Information/Consent Form
The Lived Experiences of "Camp Wives" Northwestern British Columbia

Project Lead: *Karla Bloomfield*
School of Social Work
University of Northern British Columbia
Prince George, B.C. V2N 4Z9
Cell. 250-842-XXXX
Email. xxxx@unbc.ca

Dear Participant:

Thank-you for your interest in this research on the lived experiences of "camp wives" in northwestern B.C. Karla Bloomfield is leading this research project, which is a part of her graduate study requirements in the Master of Social Work degree program. To follow is information on the research and if agreed upon at the close you may choose to sign and consent to participate. Please consider the following:

Purpose of Research
This research seeks to gain insight and information on the lived experiences and perspectives of women in northwestern BC whose partner (husband, common-law partner, boyfriend) works in a remote industrial camp for a minimum of 2 week rotations in camp. Women in the study must be at least 20 years of age. Additionally, the women's children will be under 5 years of age. This research uses a feminist and critical perspective in its analysis. As such, the data analysis will consider traditional gender roles and patriarchy as well as the role of industry and government in controlling and shaping resource community life.

You are being chosen to participate because you are a woman from Smithers, Hazelton, or Terrace, B.C. and meet the criteria indicated above. Please note, however, taking part in this study is entirely up to you: participation is voluntary and you may choose to stop participating in it at any time. The topic of participation is further discussed below.

What Happens to You in the Study?
If you say "Yes" to participate in the study here is what will happen:

The researcher- Karla and you will arrange for a time and place for you to meet up in person. You will meet at your home or wherever you are comfortable. The interview will take place over 1-2 hours. During the interview, Karla will audio record your responses. These responses will be transcribed into a software program Karla will use to analyze the data. This software is on a computer in her student office at UNBC and it is password protected. She is also going to make observation notes as she approaches, enters, and leaves the interview location. She will also be keeping a reflective journal to explore her experience in the research process. The data

obtained from the observation, journal, and follow up question notes will also be transcribed and entered into the software program.

You will be asked questions which will explore your perspectives, experiences, and identity as a "camp wife". Topics to be explored include your: identity (background, perception of self, hobbies, education, values, life goals), identity as a camp wife (history of partner's work in camp, impact on relationship, information about his job, adjustment and transition in the lifestyle), social roles (daily routine, task/duties/workload, responsibilities, gender roles, employment, life changes with camp work, social life, volunteer work, family and social network, hobbies, informal and formal social supports), children (your experiences parenting in and your perception of your child(ren)'s experiences with the camp lifestyle), industry and government (perception of policies and practices), community (impact of lifestyle on community, in general and perception of needed (or not) services), and identity as it relates to gender roles (how your experiences are shaped by being a woman). Karla will ask you a series of questions as they relate to these topics. As suggested above, these questions will touch on aspects of your personal life. In this consideration, you have the option of choosing "Yes" or "No" to answering these questions, which are located in the consent section below.
Sometime in the future, between April and August 2016, after the interview you may likely be contacted again by Karla via telephone to follow up to make sure she is clear in her understanding of what you have shared and to confirm with you that she is correctly presenting your perception of your lived experience. She will contact you at times of the day and a frequency that are convenient for you. These phone conversations would be at most one hour in length. The total number of times she would call you via telephone could total 10 phone calls maximum.

Compensation
For your participation, you will receive a $20 gift card for a grocery store of your choice in your community for your participation in the research. You will also receive a copy of the final thesis research via email, regular post, or delivered to you by me within 3 months of defending the research. You will just need to let Karla know exactly how you would like to have the thesis sent to you: email copy or hard copy. Her contact information is above.

So What About Your Anonymity?
All measures possible will be taken to protect your anonymity. Your anonymity will be respected and any information that discloses your identity will not be released without your consent. It is worth noting, however, that since the research is taking place in small, rural communities and only one woman from each community (3 in total) will be interviewed, there is the possibility that anonymity cannot be guaranteed. Anonymity is offered to you in that you have the choice to participate at your preferred location. If the interview takes place at your home, Karla will not park in your driveway if you choose. All interview data and documents will be identified only by code number. Your identifying information will be changed in the written report, such as your name and age. Karla can also present the final results of the study to you so that you can check to make sure your identity does not appear to come through in the final document. The audio recording and notes will be kept in a locked case while in transit and in a locked cabinet in Karla's UNBC student office. All data will be destroyed (deleted, shredded) within one year of her thesis defense or within 2 years from data collection, whichever comes first. You should also

be aware that in accordance with the Canadian Association of Social Workers Guidelines for Ethical Practice (2005), there are certain situations whereby Karla Bloomfield is obligated to breach anonymity. In particular, these circumstances include instances where there are threats of serious, foreseeable imminent harm to self or others or in the case that a child is being harmed and may need protection.

It is important to understand the results of this research will be reported in Karla's graduate thesis, which will be publicly available at minimum in the UNBC library. It is also the researcher's intent to possibly use the results of this research for presentation at conferences and discussion in secondary and/or post-secondary classrooms. It is also Karla's intent to publish the results in an academic journal article.

Potential Risks of the Study

It is important you understand the risks associated with participating in this study. Some of the questions may upset you as they remind of historical and ongoing challenges with camp work. The questions may also seem sensitive and personal.

It is also important Karla shares with you that she brings potential bias to the research. She is a former camp worker, her partner worked in camp, and she has family members who have worked in camp. Additionally, she is a working class woman from Hazelton, B.C. and also a feminist researcher. These aspects of her identity shape her perspective and analysis of the findings. She is also utilizing feminist and critical (such as looking at oppressive systems/structures and their impact on people) approaches to the research. In this consideration, Karla's perspective in this research considers specifically the relationships between men and women; power differences between men and women; women's possible oppression based on traditional gender roles; and how government, industry, and society reinforce traditional gender roles and oppress the working class. Importantly, however, to be fair and give voice to your perspective she will not only keep a journal to record and reflect on her bias she will also discuss this with her academic supervisor. Again, you will also be given opportunities to confirm with Karla that she is accurately presenting your perspective in the research, as indicated above.

During the interview, please let Karla know if you have any concerns or wish to stop. She will then stop the interview immediately. She also wants you to know that some of the risks to you include other's finding out you participated in this study. As indicated above, Karla will be thorough and diligent to protect your identity. Please also know that if you share with others that you participated in this research there is the possibility of being judged and ostracized because you shared personal information with someone you don't know and the research topic touches traditional gender roles, family relationships, and women's choices/opportunities in small northern towns.

If you need support, here is a list of resources:

Hazelton, B.C.:
- Northern Health Community Mental Health Services offering clinical services (assessment, treatment), life skills training, and supportive recovery 250-842-5211.
- Gitxsan Health Society mental health and addictions services include holistic, Aboriginal perspective on crisis intervention, counseling, and education Tel. 250-842-5165.

- Upper Skeena Counselling and Legal Assistance Society offering legal and advocacy services Tel. 250-842-5218.

Terrace, B.C.:
- Northern Health Community Mental Health Services offering services specifically for mental health and addiction diagnoses, such as: substance misuse, grief, loss, depressive, adjustment disorders, mood, and concurrent disorders Tel. 250-631-4202.
- Northwest Counselling offers marriage, relationship, family, stress management, anxiety and depression, and family violence and referral information services Tel. 250-638-8311;
- Terrace and District Community Services Society offers counselling services Tel. 250-635-3178.

Smithers, B.C.:
- Northern Health Community Mental Health Services offering shorter term individual, family, and group counselling services, life skills support, psycho-educational groups, and addictions day treatment program Tel. 250-847-4443.
- Northern Society for Domestic Peace services include confidential, trauma informed counselling for women, men, and children; strengthening families education program; emergency shelter and transition house Tel. 250-847-9000.

Potential Benefits of the Study
The benefit of the study to you is that you will get to share your experience and have your voice heard through the research. This research can also benefit the community through its use to inform discussion, suggest possible services for women, and point to future research needs in the region.

Study Team
All data will be collected, stored, analyzed, and written on by Karla Bloomfield. There will be instances where she may need to request the instructional support of my research committee in the research process. These committee members are also professors in the UNBC social work program. They include my supervisor, Dr. Glen Schmidt and Dr. Si Transken. Your identity will be kept private from them. Dr. Glen Schmidt's contact information, should you wish to speak to him about any questions or concerns about this research, is as follows:

Dr. Glen Schmidt
Research Supervisor and professor with the School of Social Work - UNBC
Tel. 250-960-6519
Email. schmidt@unbc.ca

Study Results
The results of this research will be reported in my graduate thesis, which is publically available at minimum in the UNBC library. It is also my intent to possibly use the results of this research for presentation at conferences and discussion in secondary and/or post-secondary classrooms. It is also my intent to publish the results in an academic journal article.

Contact Information
In case of any questions about your participation, please contact Karla Bloomfield via the telephone number and/or email address above. The final report will be available after completion of the research in 2017. If you have any complaints about this research, please direct them to the UNBC Office of Research at 250-960-6735 or reb@unbc.ca.

Participant Consent and Withdrawal
If you decide to take part, you may choose to pull out of the study at any time without giving a reason and without any negative impact on your personal and social life. Any information you shared up to the point you decided to not participate further will be securely destroyed, unless you specifically request and consent to this information being analyzed and included in the final research. If you choose to participate in the study you also have the right to refuse to answer any questions that make you feel uncomfortable.

Your signature below indicates that you have received a copy of this consent form for your own records. Your signature indicates that you consent to participate in this study.

CONSENT
1. I have read or been described the information presented in the information letter about the project:
YES NO

2. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about my involvement in this project and to receive additional details I requested.
YES NO

3. I understand that if I agree to participate in this project, I may withdraw from the project at any time up until the report completion, with no consequences of any kind. I have been given a copy of this form.
YES NO

4. I agree to be audio recorded
YES NO

5. I agree to discussing the following interview questions:

1. The background behind your decision to engage in the camp lifestyle? **Yes / No**
2. The kind of camp work he does and its circumstances (transportation, how long in the life style, his perception of it)? **Yes / No**

3. Your relationship with your husband/partner? **Yes / No**
4. How household and family duties shared in your household? **Yes / No**
5. How camp life has impacted your life: roles, duties, responsibilities, experiences? **Yes / No**
6. Your experiences as a parent and how they are impacted (or not) by the lifestyle? **Yes / No**
7. How you access varied supports (emotional, social, formal services)? **Yes / No**
8. Your social life and hobbies? **Yes / No**
9. Any engagement in community/volunteer activities? **Yes / No**
10. Your experiences with your extended family and friends as they relate to your provision of support or your receipt of support? **Yes / No**
11. Your perceptions of your children's experiences with this lifestyle? **Yes / No**
12. What is parenting like for you? Your husband (from your perspective)? **Yes/No**
13. Your thoughts on the company your hubby works for? **Yes / No**
14. What is your perception of the industry (mining/forestry/gas)? **Yes / No**
15. Your perception of the role of government in the industry?
16. How you perceive camp work impacting your community? **Yes/No**
17. Your experiences in this lifestyle as it relates to your gender/being a woman? **Yes / No**

6. Follow-up information can requested via the researcher's contact with me via telephone:
YES/NO

7. Follow-up information (e.g. transcription) can be sent to me at the following email or mailing address:
YES/NO

PARTICIPANT: _____ SIGNED _____ DATE _____

RESEARCHER: _____ SIGNED _____ DATE _____

Appendix C: Research Ethics Board Approval

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA

RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD

MEMORANDUM

To: Karla Bloomfield
CC: Glen Schmidt

From: Henry Harder, Chair
Research Ethics Board

Date: March 15, 2016

Re: **E2016.0210.012.00**
The Lived Experiences of "Camp Wives" in Northwestern British Columbia

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Thank you for submitting revisions to the Research Ethics Board (REB) regarding the above-noted proposal. Your revisions have been approved.

We are pleased to issue approval for the above named study for a period of 12 months from the date of this letter. Continuation beyond that date will require further review and renewal of REB approval. Any changes or amendments to the protocol or consent form must be approved by the REB.

Good luck with your research.

Sincerely,

Dr. Henry Harder
Chair, Research Ethics Board