Female Enterprises in Resource-Dependent Communities: Entry Decisions of Female Entrepreneurs in the Cariboo Regional District, BC

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This project is dedicated to my daughter, Miriam. Her love and admiration provided me with support and encouragement through out the duration of this project.
Abstract

This research project is an investigation of entry decisions of female entrepreneurs located in resource-dependent communities. The economic structure of resource-dependent communities is associated with a high percentage of the labour force being attached to one employer or one industry, which constrains both employment options and entrepreneurial activities. The project seeks to understand if this economic structure impacts the entry decisions of female entrepreneurs in these communities as compared to female entrepreneurs in urban areas.

In this project, the three theoretical explanations of female entrepreneurs' entry decisions common in the literature, namely, pull, push and family, are modified to take account of the specific features of the economic structure of resource-dependent communities. Interviews were conducted with eighteen female entrepreneurs in the Cariboo Regional District of British Columbia.

The main result is women in resource-dependent communities are motivated by the same push dimensions such as challenging work, positive work environment, and independence, as women in urban areas. There is also evidence to show that for women in resource-dependent communities, entry dimensions may take on different meanings and may also include new dimensions that are related to resource dependence.

The study helps to inform the diversity of female entrepreneurship and also provides a starting point for investigating self-employment as an employment option for women in resource-dependent communities.
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Introduction

Entrepreneurship in all its many forms, from small and medium size businesses to self-employment, commands a significant place in the economy. Entrepreneurial activities are important for economic growth, innovation, employment creation, and provide avenues for business investment and consumer spending. Entrepreneurial activity is therefore a key piece in the much larger puzzle of the national and local economy. This piece can often be underestimated in its significance when large industries and multinational corporations dominate the discussions. However, in both times of prosperity and recession, entrepreneurship rides the waves of the market cycles seeking and prospecting opportunities.

Alongside small businesses in traditional sectors, Canada has seen a rapid expansion of service and knowledge-based firms, as well as growth of micro home-based businesses, free agents, and solo-self employed workers and forced entrepreneurs (Hughes 2006). In 2007, Statistics Canada estimated that over 2.6 million people were considered self-employed. The two largest categories were unincorporated self-employed with no employees and incorporated self-employment with employees.

Female Entrepreneurship

A key development within entrepreneurship over the past 20 years has been the significant increase of female entrepreneurship. Women are entering entrepreneurship as a path for employment at larger rates than men. A recent magazine article reported that women head three out of every four new business ventures (Bartoszewksi 2008). In 1996, women accounted for one in three entrepreneurs up from just one in four in 1976 (Cohen 1996). In 2007, over 911,000 women were considered self-employed, which was 45% of the
total self-employed. The largest annual growth rates in female self-employed were 1985 and 1997, with 13.50% and 11.06% respectively. In 2007, the annual growth rate was 4.03%.

In British Columbia, women represent only 35% of the total self-employed in 2008. Since the late 1970’s the growth rate in British Columbia has been remarkably higher than the national average, as seen in the Figure 1. In 1979 the annual growth rate was 13.3%. In 1985 the growth rate was 17.9%. In 1997 the growth rate was 13.7%. In 2007 the growth rate was below the national average at 2.03%. Yet, British Columbia women are still lagging behind the current national 45% incidence rate of women as a percentage of the total self-employed.

Figure 1. Comparison of Female Self-Employment Growth Rates

![Female Self-Employment Growth Rates](image)


The entrance and growth of women into the field of entrepreneurship has placed the study of female entrepreneurship on the radar screen of many researchers and academics, the business community, and government (Birley 1989, Cohen 1996, Cowling and Taylor 2001,
Hughes 2005, Stevenson 1986). The subject is often discussed within the larger context of the process of the feminization of the labour force, which has been outlined as both an economic and social concern (Hughes 2005).

The history of women entering the labour force and entrepreneurship has been different than that of men. Women have historically faced and endured different role expectations than men, which has often created barriers to employment. These role expectations caused women to be denied access to the requisite resources for entrepreneurial entry, such as access to capital, business and technical education, and prior management experience (Stevenson 1986). Previous to studies in female entrepreneurship, the cases of business ownership by women had been relegated to those incidents where a woman had inherited a business from her father or husband (Stevenson 1986).

**Research Objective**

The growth rate of female entrepreneurship paints a picture of success for the women of British Columbia and Canada. Is this success only limited to certain groups of women, in central locations such as the urban areas of Toronto, Edmonton, Vancouver, and Montreal? The overarching theme of this research study is to investigate female entrepreneurship in resource-dependent communities. This theme is integrative as it combines both economic dependence and gender in a review of entrepreneurship. The research objective is to examine the entry decisions of women to become entrepreneurs in resource-dependent communities. In examining entry decisions, the focus will provide insights into the motivations of these women who, unlike their urban counterparts, face unique economic conditions that may hinder or promote entrepreneurial entry.
Research Significance

This research is an examination of an under researched area within entrepreneurship, female entrepreneurship, and women’s work in resource-dependent communities. This study draws attention to the importance of entrepreneurship as a potential employment option for women in these communities. The scope of this study is too small to make generalizations about female entrepreneurship in resource-dependent communities; however, it will provide background information that can be used to inform larger studies in the future.

This research helps to inform the diversity of female entrepreneurship as it provides insights into employment decisions for this group of women, as they face different employment options that their urban counterparts may not encounter. While women as an entire group face specific challenges and barriers, there is an acknowledgement that there is diversity in experiences between different subgroups (Hughes 2006, Verhuel et al 2006). Hughes argues that we need to recognize the diversity within women’s experiences in that “women’s experiences are shaped by different aspects of their social location (for example, class, motherhood, race and so on)” (Hughes 2005:24). Birley further comments that, “for any minority group, its position in society will be a significant factor in determining individual attitudes to entrepreneurial activity” (Birley, 1989:37).

The results of this study can also be significant for evaluating the effectiveness of current policies aimed at employment and entrepreneurship for women in resource-dependent communities. Hughes explains that the effective policy discussion is important especially in how current programs and policies respond to differences in experiences and groups (Hughes 2006). Specifically, policies or targeted programs may only be of interest to a specific group of entrepreneurs. It is important to examine policies for structural impediments that could
reduce the success factor of certain groups of people. Merrett and Gruidl state “women can only achieve greater success if some of the structural impediments are removed from the marketplace, and that local communities and regional organizations need to take greater leadership role in promoting the success of businesswomen” (Merrett and Gruidl 2000:434).

Research Stakeholders

There are many different stakeholders that would benefit from this research study such as those interested in entrepreneurship, gender studies, and local community development. A number of organizations and associations dedicated to entrepreneurship and women, including the Women’s Enterprise Network¹, would benefit from the research as it can provide them with information on where their association could provide services in these communities. The study would also benefit local regional development corporations, Chambers of Commerce, and small municipalities wanting to help develop the entrepreneurial potential of the women in their local communities. Researchers involved in resource-dependent communities may find this study of interest as it helps to inform an area that requires further examination.

Review of Literature

The literature regarding the entry decisions of female entrepreneurs in resource-dependent communities is small and lacks attention in the prominent economics and business literature. Therefore, in order to obtain a full picture of processes that are central to framing this project, I explored literature from a number of different areas, such as entrepreneurship,

¹ Information regarding this organization can be found at http://www.womensenterprise.ca/index.php
gender, and geography. The literature includes both academic work and analytical studies produced by Statistics Canada.

**Entrepreneur Definition**

The definition of “entrepreneur” is an important aspect in conducting entrepreneurial research. Definition of the term guides the creation of a framework, the analysis of information, and the selection of research participants. It affects who and what business activities are included and excluded for study. The fundamental question beneath the definition is, “how should we define people who work for themselves?” Do we label them as small business owners, entrepreneurs, micro-entrepreneurs, independent contractors, free agents, or self-employed (Hughes 2005)?

In the literature, definitions are discussed as if they could be placed on a continuum. This continuum is organized based on the description of the activity underlining the definition. A broad definition could be based on a simple activity while a narrow definition could be based on complex activity. Hughes relates the definitional usage to the dependence on the structure of the research (Hughes 2005). Stakeholders in the research may require a certain kind of definition for their specific area of study.

The broadest (simple) definition is the act of being self-employed (Lin et al 2000). This definition includes all activities related to someone who is not considered a paid employee of an organization. An argument against this definition of an entrepreneur and subsequently entrepreneurial activity is that it would include “disguised employees”, who are often considered dependent contractors (Hughes 2005).

One of the narrowest (complex) definitions is the act of new firm formation. This definition focuses on activities related to venture innovation and is normally discussed in
terms of high market risk. However, this definition leaves out anyone who purchases and opens franchises, independent contractors, and many home-based businesses. One example related to the definitional debate can be viewed through the terminology used by Statistics Canada and the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor.

Statistics Canada uses the terminology of “self-employment” as it relates to providing statistical information on entrepreneurship in Canada. They define it as “those persons who own and operate a business, farm, or professional practice”. This includes independent salespersons, franchise owners, and those who work independently. The self-employed are furthered categorized as either employers (those that who usually employ one or more paid workers) or own-account workers (those who do not usually have paid help). This definition is further divided between incorporated or unincorporated business activities (Statistics Canada 2008).

The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor uses the terminology of entrepreneurship in its discussion of information regarding entrepreneurship. The term is defined as “any attempt at a new business or new venture creation, such as self-employment, a new business organization, or the expansion of any existing business, by an individual, a team of individuals, or an established business (Reynolds, Hay and Camp 1999; Hughes 2005, 2006). While this definition allows for the incorporation of franchises and the purchase of existing firms, the focus is on the expansion of the businesses.

These standard usages highlight two important remarks that can be made regarding the definition of both entrepreneur and subsequently entrepreneurial activity. First, there is no common acceptable definition of an entrepreneur. Second, the link between self-employment and entrepreneurship is ambiguous. There is no clear defining point that
separates self-employment activity and entrepreneurial activity\(^2\). The research often places the discourse of the two activities in the same space while at the same time provides avenues for separation.

An interesting discussion was found in the literature regarding the perceptions of the definition of entrepreneur by entrepreneurs. It could be argued that this perceptual observation mimics the definitional continuum. Early on in Hughes’ study of female owned enterprises in Alberta, one of her participants recommended the adoption of the term business owners, rather than self-employed, in the search for further participants (Hughes 2005). In contrast, Grant’s research on farmers’ markets in the rural areas of United Kingdom, found that a large proportion of the female stallholders would say that they were not entrepreneurs because they felt it was low risk and a necessity, not a venture creation (Grant 2004).

**Entry**

Vivarelli describes the entrepreneurial entry decision-making process as a “dynamic process starting from the business idea passing through the foundation of the new firm” (Vivarelli 2004:41). Winn further informs this process by stating, “the decision to start a business is a complex process that incorporates one’s personality and interests, upbringing and role models, skills and opportunities” (Winn 2005: 382). Hughes adds, “circumstances and desires that underlie the individual actions are complex and are difficult to measure” (Hughes 2005:18). These three statements highlight three important aspects regarding entry: first there is a decision based on an idea; second, the decision and idea are often influenced by characteristics and individual motivations; and third, those characteristics and motivations are complex. The literature on entry is an attempt to investigate the degree of influences and

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\(^2\) I experienced this ambiguity directly upon searching for literature regarding entrepreneurship. Searching for entrepreneurship often brought up articles that discuss self-employment and vice versa.
or causal relationships between the entry decision along with the many characteristics and motivations.

Vivarelli provides a concise summary of the different theories related to entry in the literature. The first theoretical understanding of entrepreneurial entry exists within the economic theory of the firm, in which entry is a process triggered by the expectations of profits. Vivarelli coins this framework as textbook entry stating that people have an idea to enter the market in order to take a share of the profits. The second theoretical framework to explain entry is an investigation of related push and pulls factors that would influence individuals. The third theoretical understanding of entry is linked to Schumpeter’s idea in which the features of the founder are important, including personal characteristics such as age and education (Vivarelli 2004).

All three conceptual understandings of entry have various merits for use as a framework for researching the decision to enter into the market through entrepreneurial activity. However, the second understanding (push and pull) has by far been the most widely used in the literature and research on entrepreneurship. The third concept is often used in conjunction with the push/pull as it captures information about demographics and personal traits in relation to motivational factors.

**Push and Pull**

The push and pull conceptual framework at its most fundamental level tries to determine which of the categories (push or pull) are the most influential in the entry decision process. The pull category includes motivators that are considered “classic” factors that would attract both men and women into self-employment (Lin et al 2000, Hughes 2005, 2006, Vivarelli 2004). There is a desire within the individual to seek out greater
independence and autonomy, a challenging work environment, being your own boss, self-fulfillment, and improved financial opportunity (Hughes 2006). Hughes contends that the emphasis placed in the pull categories is the effect of motivators on individual choice, “suggesting workers are voluntarily pulled into better opportunities within a growing enterprise culture” (Hughes 2005:217). Pull motivators are often considered as a pro-active response in the career and lifestyle decision-making process. The push category includes motivators that arise from a person’s reaction to their environment (Lin et al 2000). Motivations often explored in this category are related to unemployment (Lin et al 2000, Hughes 2006).

**Gender**

The push/pull framework was first analyzed without a gendered perspective. It did not take into consideration that motivations impacting entry may differ between women and men. A gendered perspective allowed the inclusion of other pull factors such as a reaction to the glass ceiling, sexual division of labour, and harassment. Hughes explains that a gendered question related to entry is, “are women entering self-employment as an emancipatory route to pass barriers and discrimination in employment” (Hughes 2005:42)? The inclusion of a gendered lens in evaluating specific motivations not only brought new variables into the entry framework, it also included a new category around work and family.

**Typology**

Hughes further opens up the push and pull theoretical framework to explain entry by bridging the three motivational categories with business sector and economic success. In her empirical study of female self-employment in Canada, using data obtained from the Survey
of Self-Employment\textsuperscript{3}, the framework merges into a typology that highlights important differences between the categories. The first category is \textit{Classic Entrepreneurs}, who have higher human capital, and higher income. They operate more traditional businesses that are incorporated and typically employ others. The second category is \textit{Work/Family Entrepreneurs}, who have lower incomes, and work the least hours of all groups. They are more likely to operate unincorporated home-based businesses, and normally are working alone. The third category is \textit{Forced Entrepreneurs}, who are more recent entrants, with the majority working in unincorporated solo businesses. Their income levels are the same as those in the work/family entrepreneur; however, their work hours are much the same as classic entrepreneur (Hughes 2006).

\textbf{Evidence}

The existence of push and pull factors are normally evaluated empirically. While the literature provides evidence of the presence of both push and pull motivators (Lin 2000), the pull motivators are the most frequently discussed. They also have the greatest amount of supporting evidence (Hughes 2005).

There is evidence to support the idea that push factors differ between women and men. Verheul et al.'s cross-country study found that the effect of unemployment is positive for women, and that women are more likely to start a business out of necessity in a situation of economic recession than men (Verheul et al 2006). Hughes also found evidence that women in Canada ranked the importance of unemployment higher than their male counterparts though the difference was very small. Hughes' empirical study based upon data from the Survey of Self Employment indicated that 22\% of woman in the survey reported

\textsuperscript{3} The Survey of Self-Employment was conducted by Statistics Canada in 2000 as an extension of the Labour Force Survey.
that they had entered self-employment because they could not find suitable paid employment\(^4\); this is in comparison to 21.7% of men (Hughes 2006). Also for Canada, Lin et al, using regression analysis, confirmed that there is only a small difference in the impact of unemployment on male and female entry decisions (Lin et al 200).

Another gender difference is in the area of family. While the gendered dimension brought the issue of family into the push and pull debate, there is evidence that family is also an issue for men. Verheul et al found that family was important to both men and women (Verheul et al 2006). While Verheul et al did not emphasize the differences in impact of family between men and women; Hughes did note a significant difference. Hughes’ 2006 study showed that only 7.9% of men cited work-family balance as a motivator, in comparison with 31.9% of women (Hughes 2006).

Push factors, in addition to work and family, are not the only areas that provide evidence of differences between women and men. Verheul et al’s study found evidence that life satisfaction\(^5\) as a motivator had an effect on women but not on men (Verheul et al 2006). Hughes found that even though independence was a top motivator for both women and men, the response rate was drastically different, with 41% of men ranking it the most important in comparison with only 24% of the women (Hughes 2006). In the same study, Hughes found that the motivations of challenge, creativity, and success had similar response rates with 10% women and 9.7% of men. The desire to work from home was also equally chosen between the genders with 9% of men and 8.4% of women\(^6\).

\(^4\) In this particular article, not finding suitable paid employment was an indication of unemployment rather than the class ceiling affect.
\(^5\) The meaning of life satisfaction was related to work-life balance.
\(^6\) The study did not provide any information on connection between family obligations and work from home as they were two separate choices in the survey.
Gender differences are also found in research related to the entry decisions, which take account of whether the location is urban or rural. Merrett and Gruidl conducted an empirical study in Illinois, US to investigate the entry decisions from a standpoint of an urban/rural framework. Their research was an attempt to capture "a geography of female entrepreneurship", by an empirical examination of the impact of location, place and space on entrepreneurial entry and success. Their study postulated that gender and location combined hinder the success rates of female business owners. Their research showed that when understanding location, rural women were more likely than any other group to have been retired, unemployed, or a student prior to starting a new business. Another significant area regarding the urban/rural disparity is that rural entrepreneurs have less education than their urban counterparts. Rural women are more likely to enter the retail sector while urban women have a relative preference for consumer services. Since rural women often must travel further to work, they tend to favor retail home-based businesses (Merrett and Gruidl 2000).

The key highlight related to this project was that in terms of motivation, there were no significantly different motivations based on gender or location (Merrett and Gruidl 2000). This was counter to their hypothesis. Their results indicated that all of their respondents were positively motivated to become entrepreneurs, as they had a desire to be their own boss, increase their income and for a challenge. Only 3% of respondents indicated that unemployment or lack of job opportunities as their main motivator (Merrett and Gruidl 2000).

In contrast, two other rural focused researchers found that survival was the prime motivator for rural female entrepreneurs. This evidence was found through ethnographic and
qualitative research instead of surveys that asked respondents to select from a constrained list. Weber conducted an ethnographic study in the rural township of Cedar Country, Nebraska. The study sought to bring an “exceptional” look at what motivated five farm women to create an entrepreneurial venture. The participants’ joint venture of the St. James Marketplace was a reaction to rural and cultural decline. Their decision was characterized more by their gender roles and cultural identities, which Weber claims is atypical of urban entrepreneurs (Weber 2007). Entrepreneurial activities were related to cultural values and norms, instead of a position that they held within a historical and institutional context (Weber 2007).

Grant also conducted an ethnographic case study to understand the Farmers’ Market movements in the UK and how they relate to the growth of female entrepreneurs. This study was conducted in an effort to highlight processes occurring in a diversified rural environment. The research was conducted in rural areas in the UK including Staffordshire Moorlands, South Cheshire, and Derbyshire Dales, interviewing farmer market co-coordinators. The coordinators explained that many of the entrepreneurs are farmers’ wives who are there to generate small additional incomes, which will mean the difference between the farms surviving or not surviving. The research also indicated that many of the stallholders had been attracted to the farmers’ market partly because job opportunities within rural communities were scarce and did not offer the flexibility needed to meet childcare arrangements (Grant 2004).

The difference in the results of the research could be the difference in the methodologies used to understand motivation. Merrett and Gruidl used a questionnaire in

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7 Rural decline is a concept related to the soci-economic changes occurring in the rural area, such as declining populations, urban encroachment, decline in agricultural land, and low crop prices.

8 The article did not distinguish if the farmers’ wives also considered themselves farmers.
which respondents were asked to rank seven potential motivating factors. In contrast, Weber and Grant took a more personal approach and allowed the participants to explain the motivations in their own language. The difference could also be related to the different locations, one was conducted in the United States while the other was conducted in the United Kingdom.

**Push versus Pull**

There is significant debate about the influence of the push and pull factors on entry with evidence providing support for both sides. However, there is beginning to be an understanding that there may not be a winner to the debate. Instead of a winner, Hughes places the categories on a continuum (Hughes 2005, 2006). From the literature and empirical evidence it is apparent that the push and pull framework may be more complex than a linear continuum with push and pull holding opposite ends.

Perception and evaluation of the motivations can make it difficult to determine the placement. One person may perceive unemployment as a push motivator, while another may perceive unemployment as a pull. In regards to rural and urban differences, some rural workers may be self-employed out of necessity because paid employment or job choices are lacking, whereas others may see an opportunity to provide products and services that their communities would not otherwise offer (Freshwater 1997).
Literature Gaps

There are two glaring gaps that exist within the current literature. The first gap is the lack of research on female entrepreneurs in resource-dependent communities within the literature on female entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship studies9. The second gap is the lack of research on self-employment and entrepreneurial options for women in resource-dependent communities within the literature on women in resource-dependent communities. The research on the women and work in resource-dependent communities primarily focuses on paid or unpaid employment within or outside of the main resource industry.

Theoretical Framework

Self-employed/entrepreneurial women in resource-dependent communities could be considered a minority within both their towns and academic literature. The literature reviewed for this research, however, was effective in providing a definitional focal point, a theoretical framework, and a hypothesis regarding the research question of why do women in resource dependent-communities become entrepreneurs.

Self-employment will be used as the definitional reference point for entrepreneurship in this research project. The selection of this simple definition was determined by three factors. The first factor is that it allows the quantitative data collected to be analyzed within the same definition as Statistics Canada and most of the research on entrepreneurship in Canada. The second factor is that female entrepreneurship may be a smaller sector than self-

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9 There is limited information on rural female entrepreneurship. However, these studies do not take into consideration the possible differences that exist between resource-based communities and rural areas. Understanding possible differences between these groups may be especially important in regards to self-employment, because when farm self-employment activity is excluded, differences in rural and urban rates are much smaller and often follow the Canadian average (Du Plessis 2004).
employment in the labour market in resource-dependent communities. Selecting self-employment would enable the researcher to elicit a larger sample of participants than if another definition was chosen. The third factor is that a focus on self-employment can enable the research to highlight possible areas of interest regarding the decision for self-employment versus paid-employment for resource-dependent communities.

Framework: Economic Dependence and Gender

The research question formulated for this study was “are the entry decisions of women in resource-dependent communities different than women in urban communities?” I do expect to find that women in resource communities will have the same motivations that have been normally found under the pull/push/family framework. However, I do expect to find a difference in the degree in which the dimensions will be present. The research on entry does show that the pull dimensions are more likely to be found and have a higher response rate, however, these studies do not take into consideration the different lived experiences of women in resource-dependent communities. The possibility exists that specific dimensions related to resource-dependent communities and gender may show that pull or family dimensions are more likely to be found and may have a higher response rate. I expect pull dimension to be more prominent in resource-dependent communities as unemployment is more prevalent, as well as the majority of employment opportunities are often constrained to the local industry and public services.

Resource-dependent communities typically have a different economic structure than other communities. The economic structure is designed around a high percentage of the labour market being attached to one employer or one industry, which thereby constrains both
employment options and the existence of industrial activities. Community isolation from larger metropolitan centers makes chances for commuting for work non-existent.

Randall and Ironside explain that while labour market strategies differ by place, they also differ by the sector and the degree of dominance of a particular resource-based industry in a community (Randall and Ironside 1996). They explain, “resource-dependent communities in Canada are clearly vastly different, as reflected in the role of women and part-time labour in the groups of communities, in the relationship between the dominate resource sector and the economic activities in the communities and in their relative isolation” (Randall and Ironside 1996: 32). In their research they found that while there was an overall absence of females in the pulp-and-paper labour forces, women played a progressively more significant role as the level of industrial specialization increased in the communities. However, Randall and Ironside further found that the opposite situation exists in the fish and food-processing and forestry communities where women are less represented as the level of resource dependency increase (Randall and Ironside 1996). Therefore, the employment of women’s labour has been different depending on the specific “resource”-dependent community to which they belong.

It is imperative to adapt the push/pull framework so that it takes into consideration the different lived experiences and economic structures of the communities that could influence and/or impact the entry decision. Without consideration for differences among communities, a generalized framework could neglect to expose important specific dimensions that otherwise would not be found in a general study. Regional analysis needs to be undertaken.

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10 Randall and Ironside were explaining that while the degree to which a community is dependent upon the dominant resource employer does not seem to have much impact on the level of female participation. However, they did find that there was a moderate inverse relationship with the least and most dependent communities. They found there was a U Shape relationship. (Randall and Ironside 1996:pg 28)
to allow for the inclusion of regional differences and experiences that help to enhance
diversity within the research.

I created a resource dependent and gender entry framework for this study through an
extrapolation and modification of information on the push/pull categories discussed by
Hughes (2005, 2006). Hughes’ work contains a clear outline of the gendered dimensions
included in the push/pull framework. Her work also is infused with the notion that
“meaning” of the dimension can be important. While the general dimensions included in the
push and pull categories are considered universal, the meaning and interpretation in the lives
of people can be different (Hughes 2005). For example, the desire to have meaningful work
dimension was explored in Hughes’ research on women entrepreneurs in Alberta and she
found that meaningful work also extended to a desire to make a difference in the world and a
desire to help others. Table 1 provides a pictorial description of my extrapolation and
modification of the dimensions, from general, to gender, to resource dependency and gender.
The dimensions outlined in the third column (Resource Dependence and Women) are my
contributions to the push and pull discussion. In my contribution to the literature, I
hypothesize that these dimensions will be important for the group of women being studied.

Pull Dimensions

The prominence of pull dimensions in the entrepreneurship research provides
evidence that these dimensions are likely to be found in resource-dependent communities.
There is no evidence in the research on women in these communities that suggest that these
women would have a lack of desire for challenging work, being their own boss, creating
positive work environments or self-fulfillment in their employment. However, there is
evidence to suggest that the desire for meaningful work may take on a specific meaning, as a
desire to help their local community. Women in resource-dependent communities play a significant role in the survival and vitality of their communities through their community involvement and their paid and unpaid labour (Marchak 1983, Egan and Klausen 1998).

There may be a desire to provide goods or services that the women feel are needed in the community.

**Push Dimensions**

Evidence of the push dimensions has been the smallest area uncovered in the entry research. Given the nature of the economic and social system in the resource-dependent communities, I hypothesize that the push dimensions may take on different meanings than what are currently studied.

The first dimension, unemployment, requires a broader meaning in order to adequately address the specific employment realities that women face in these communities. I hypothesize that unemployment may be more prevalent for the women in these communities because of the presence of three inter-related processes. The first is that for women employed within the main industry, unemployment due to restructuring disproportionately hits women (Egan and Klausen 1998, Reed 2003, Halseth and Ryser 2004). The second process is that in addition to restructuring in the resource industry, business services, which have traditionally provided opportunities for female labour, may be among the first to close following resource industry downsizing (Halseth and Ryser 2004).

The third process is the possible effect of reacting to a spouse’s unemployment. Their spouses’ unemployment could be a result of economic restructuring in the industry or through a disability caused by an accident at work. The family dynamics of resource-dependent households indicate that the male partner normally has the highest income mainly
because of the high wages received in the resource industry. Halseth and Ryser's review of female labour in resource communities showed that women consistently earned less than men. When women worked full-time they earned 52.6% of what men earned in 1986 and only 58.2% of what men earned in 1996. For women in part-time positions, they earned just 29.6% of men's part-time earnings in 1986, and 30.5% in 1996 (Halseth and Ryser 2004).

The loss of this primary income may impact a woman's decision to enter the workforce and subsequently enter self-employment. In Halseth and Ryser's review of restructuring and economic uncertainty in the Cariboo Regional District they found evidence to support the hypothesis that changing employment was used as a coping mechanism by both men and women (Halseth and Ryser 2004). Restructuring pressures and reactions to economic transition are normally dealt with at the household level, and women have historically played a key role in coping strategies. While the majority of research provides evidence of female participation in strikes, forming support groups, and intensifying paid labour (Halseth and Ryser 2004), there is no evidence to suggest that self-employment should not be included in this list of acts of coping mechanisms.

Halseth and Ryser also indicated that there is growing importance of dual household income in today's resource-dependent communities. They state that "the traditional high income of resource towns previously negated the necessity of two income households, but increased down time in resource industries can mean significantly less annual income if the household remains dependent upon one income source" (Halseth and Ryser 2004:186). The women in these communities may be seeking self-employment to provide important additional family income.
The second dimension, *underemployment*, has not been discussed in any previous studies. I argue that this dimension may be extremely important for the women in these communities as the limitations and specifics of employment options are more pronounced than in urban areas. The existence of the limited employment options support the reasoning as to why women in resource towns are more likely to be unemployed than their urban counterparts (Leblanc 2001). The limited employment options are a direct result of the economic structure. The industrial and occupational base of resource towns is often limited to the primary industry, small business services, and public services.

Women’s employment options are further constrained when they are often shut out of employment options within the main industry. Occupational segregation in resource industries is a well-known process as employment opportunities have been historically and continue to be male-dominated. Women’s employment options are further constrained as there is evidence that paid employment is part-time or part-year (Leblanc 2001).

These employment constraints, along with evidence that women in resource-dependent communities are obtaining higher education than their male counterparts (Halseth and Ryser 2004), brought together capture the dimension of underemployment. Halseth and Ryser explain that “historically BC resource towns followed the pattern of young men dropping out of high school to pick up lucrative mill jobs while young women not only completed high school but also pursued post-secondary education as part of their search for work (Halseth and Ryser 2004:176). It is plausible to consider that these educated women would be likely to find paid full-time employment if they were located near larger urban centers where the affects of industrial economic restructuring, economic organization, and occupational segregation are less severe.
The third dimension, geographic isolation, is a new dimension to be considered in affecting the decision to become self-employed. The location of the community’s proximity to larger metropolitan towns can effect employment in number of ways. Geographical isolation can constrain the ability to commute to another town or city. As outlined in the literature review, Merrett and Gruidl explain that for rural women, when commuting is not an option, home based business are often chosen as the alternative to paid employment (Merrett and Gruidl 2000). However, it also could provide the opportunity to provide goods or services that are not currently offered in the community. The success of such an opportunity would be determined by the proximity of the town to a larger community and population size.

Family

Work-life balance may also take on a specific meaning for the women in resource-dependent communities. Like their female urban counterparts, these women typically face the demands of being the primary care giver. These demands often result in a desire for women to seek flexibility in work hours. From an entrepreneurship perspective, independent business ownership appears to have all the ingredients for women who wish to have both career and family (Winn 2005). Flexibility for women in resource towns may be an important motivation for self-employment as flexibility may already play an important factor in their daily lives. Halseth and Ryser explain “flexibility describes the balancing of pressures, choices, and expectations that have long been a part of their lives” (Halseth and Ryser 2004:186).
For women in a resource-dependent community, the importance and constraints on their household caused by their spouses' work may play a role in the importance and desire for flexibility. There have been a number of studies that indicate the importance of the role that women's work is carried out in relation to their husbands' employment (Marchak 1983, Reed 2003). Shift-work regimes can limit the amount of time women have outside of their caring roles and also limits the accessibility of daycare. Childcare is an important issue for women and subsequently for their employment and self-employment options. Unincorporated home-based businesses may provide an opportunity to overcome the problem of limited child care services.
Table 1. Extrapolated Push/Pull/Work and Family Entry Dimensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>General</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Resource Dependence &amp; Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PULL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenging Work</td>
<td>Challenging Work:</td>
<td>Challenging Work:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Variety in Work</td>
<td>Variety in Work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Complexity of Work</td>
<td>Complexity of Work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learn and Acquire New Skills</td>
<td>Learn and Acquire New Skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being your own Boss</td>
<td>Being your own Boss</td>
<td>Being your own Boss</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence and autonomy</td>
<td>Independence and autonomy</td>
<td>Independence and autonomy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Fulfillment</td>
<td>Self-Fulfillment</td>
<td>Self-Fulfillment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Desire to have Meaningful Work: Making a Difference in the world, helping others</td>
<td>Desire to have meaningful work: Making a difference in their local community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Creating a Positive Work Environment</td>
<td>Creating a Positive Work Environment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PUSH</strong></td>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>Unemployment: Own unemployment, Spouses unemployment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Glass Ceiling</td>
<td>Glass Ceiling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sexual Harassment/ Harassment</td>
<td>Sexual Harassment/Harassment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Underemployment: Lack of Full-time Work, Lack of Job Opportunities, Occupational segregation - The entrenchment of the sexual division labour - the idea of man's and women's work</td>
<td>Sexual Harassment/Harassment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Geographic Isolation: Commuting time to other locales for work</td>
<td>Geographic Isolation: Commuting time to other locales for work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FAMILY</strong></td>
<td>Work-Life Balance</td>
<td>Work-Life Balance: Demands of primary care giver role, Flexible Work Hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Work-Life Balance: Demands of primary care giver role, Flexible Work Hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Flexible Work Hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Spouses work hours, rotating work shift schedules</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of Access to Child Care</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Methodology**

This research was conducted with the approval of the Research Ethics Board at the University of Northern British Columbia. Board approval was granted for the following aspects of the study: geographical locations, data collection instruments, and participant selection and recruitment methods.
Geographical Scope

The resource-dependent communities selected for this study are Quesnel, Williams Lake, and One Hundred Mile House. These three communities are located within the boundaries of the Cariboo Regional District of British Columbia. All three communities were included in the list of 220 communities set out Randall and Ironside’s 1996 classification of resource-dependent communities (Randall and Ironside 1996). In 2004, these three communities were selected as the research area by researchers investigating gender at work in resource-dependent communities (Halseth and Ryser 2004). Halseth and Ryser explain that these communities where selected because they “represent in many ways the pressures and changes that mark resource town restructuring in British Columbia over the past 20 years” (Halseth and Ryser 2004:181). These changes and pressures could impact entrepreneurial entry decisions.

Quesnel

The city of Quesnel is located approximately 135 kilometers from the city of Prince George. The population of Quesnel, based on the 2006 Census, is 9,326\(^{11}\). The male-to-female ratio of the population is very close to 1:1 with a slightly higher presence of women, as there were 4,490 males and 4,835 females. The employment structure for women illustrates an interesting picture. The proportion of women in relation to the total amount in the labour force (4,865) was 47%. Self-employed females held 34% of the total number of the 465 self-employed workers. This is just slightly below the 35% incidence rate for British Columbia, and well below the national rate of 45%. Self-employment accounted for only 7%

\(^{11}\) This only includes 2006 Census information on the city of Quesnel, and not the Census agglomeration that includes the outlying areas
of the total female labour force and 12% of the total male labour force (please refer to Table 2).

Table 2. Self-Employment in Quesnel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geography: Quesnel</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total labour force</td>
<td>4865</td>
<td>2575</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>2285</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class of worker - Not applicable</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All classes of worker</td>
<td>4790</td>
<td>2570</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>2220</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paid workers</td>
<td>4470</td>
<td>2370</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>2100</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees</td>
<td>4330</td>
<td>2270</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>2060</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed (incorporated)</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Without paid help</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With paid help</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed (unincorporated)</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Without paid help</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With paid help</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unpaid family workers</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Self-Employed</td>
<td>465</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

% of Self-Employed/Labour Force | 12.0% | 7.0% |

Source: author's tabulation Census 2006 March 2008

The structure of female self-employment shows that these women are predominately employed in unincorporated business as 75% of the total female self-employment belong to this category (see Figure 2). The majority of the women work alone, as the no employee category accounts for 71% of the total unincorporated self-employed females and 59% of the total amount of self-employed females. The women who are self-employed in incorporated business are more likely to employ other people. The paid help category comprises 75% of the total self-employed incorporated category.
Williams Lake

The city of Williams Lake is located approximately 235 kilometers south of Prince George and approximately 120 kilometers south of Quesnel. The population of Williams Lake, based on the 2006 Census, is 10,744\textsuperscript{12}. The male-to-female ratio of the population is also close to 1:1 with a higher presence of women, as there were 5,245 males and 5,500 females. The proportion of women in relation to the total amount in the labour force (5,905) was 47\%. Women accounted for 47\% of the total amount of the self-employed with 260 out of a total of 550. This is higher than the 35\% incidence rate for British Columbia, and higher than the national rate of 45\%. As seen in Table 3, the self-employed workers as a percentage of the total labour force is about 9\% for both men and women.

\textsuperscript{12} This only includes 2006 Census information on the city of Williams Lake, and not the Census agglomeration that includes the outlying areas
The structure of female self-employment shows that the women in this community are also predominately owners of unincorporated businesses, since 88% of the total female self-employment is accounted for by this category. The majority of the women work alone, as the no employee category accounts for 78% of the total unincorporated self-employed females and 69% of the total amount of self-employed females. The women who are self-employed in incorporated businesses are more likely to employ other people. The paid help category comprises the entire amount in the total self-employed incorporated category. Figure 3 shows the distribution of the self-employment categories.

Table 3. Self-Employment in Williams Lake.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geography: Williams Lake</th>
<th>Total - Sex</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total labour force</td>
<td>5905</td>
<td>3145</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>2760</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class of worker - Not applicable</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All classes of worker</td>
<td>5830</td>
<td>3110</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>2720</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paid workers</td>
<td>5430</td>
<td>2940</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>2485</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees</td>
<td>5275</td>
<td>2820</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>2455</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed (incorporated)</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Without paid help</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>114%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With paid help</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed (unincorporated)</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Without paid help</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With paid help</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Self-Employed</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Yo of Self-Employed/Labour Force | 9.2% | 9.4% |

Source: author’s tabulation Census 2006 March 2008
The district municipality of One Hundred Mile House is located approximately 326 kilometers south of Prince George and approximately 91 kilometers south of Williams Lake. The population of One Hundred Mile House, based on the 2006 Census, is 1,885\(^\text{13}\). The male-to-female ratio of the population is over 1:1 with a higher presence of women, as there were 860 males and 1,020 females. The proportion of women in relation to the total amount in the labour force (850) is 48%. Self-employed females held 34% of the total amount of the 145 self-employed workers. This is just slightly below the 35% incidence rate for British Columbia, and well below the national rate of 45%. Self-employment accounts for 12% of the total female labour force, while self-employment accounts for 20% of the total male labour force (please refer to Table 4).

\(^{13}\) This only includes 2006 Census information on the district municipality of One Hundred Mile House, and not its part in a Census agglomeration.
Table 4. Self-Employment in One Hundred Mile House

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geography: One Hundred Mile House</th>
<th>Total - Sex</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total labour force</td>
<td>850</td>
<td>445</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class of worker - Not applicable</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All classes of worker</td>
<td>825</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paid workers</td>
<td>740</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees</td>
<td>680</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed (incorporated)</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Without paid help</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With paid help</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed (unincorporated)</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Without paid help</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With paid help</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Self-Employed</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Self-Employed/Labour Force</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: author’s tabulation Census 2006 March 2008

The structure of female self-employment shows that the women in this community are predominately owners of incorporated businesses since this category accounts for 70% of the total female self-employment. The majority of these women employ other people, as this category comprises 71% of the total number of incorporated. The women who are self-employed in unincorporated activities. However, they are more likely to work alone, as zero people are recorded in the paid employee category. Figure 4 shows the distribution of the self-employment categories.
Figure 4. Female Self-Employment in One Hundred Mile House

Data Collection

The data were collected using both a questionnaire and face-to-face interviews (please refer to Appendix I and II). The two data collection instruments were based upon those used by Hughes (2006) but were modified to reflect the dimensions outlined in the third column of Table 1. The questions contained in the questionnaire pertained to information regarding socio-economic and demographic variables, business background information, and economic performance. The semi-structured interview was used to obtain a more in-depth understanding of the personal experiences related to motivations. Both the questionnaire and interview questions were modified to include questions relating to the specific resource dependent variables outlined in the theoretical framework. The questionnaire and the interview were conducted at the same time. This enabled a higher response rate than would be expected by sending out a questionnaire prior to an interview.

The information was collected over a three-week period during the month of February 2009. Interviews were conducted in an informal setting such as a coffee shop, a restaurant,
or a local meeting room. These settings were chosen as a way to lessen possible interruptions and distractions that could arise from being in the participant’s home or workplace. The interviews for the Williams Lake participants were conducted over the telephone because of scheduling and timing issues. In one case, the questionnaire (demographic information) was not received for one over the phone participant. This was because of technical issues, however, the in-depth interview contained information relating to education, marital status and employment history.

Participant Recruitment and Selection

The recruitment of participants was conducted through a variety of different channels. The first channel was through contacting the local Chamber of Commerce in each of the communities (Quesnel, Williams Lake and One Hundred Mile House14) and asking permission to have them send my request for participants through to their membership list on my behalf. While my request was viewed favorably, I was not able to confirm if the Williams Lake Chamber of Commerce sent out the information, as I did not receive any participants from Williams Lake by this method. In Quesnel, I was invited to the Chambers’ monthly Women in Business Networking breakfast where I was given time to address the members about my research topic and to recruit participants. When I approached the South Cariboo Chamber of Commerce I inquired about a Women in Business group. Their representative explained that the Chamber at one time did have such a group but that the group was not currently active. However, the representative did explain that most of the new members to the Chamber were women.

14 One Hundred Mile House belongs to the South Cariboo Chamber of Commerce, which includes smaller communities from Lac La Hache, Clinton, and east to Little Fort.
A second channel that I used was contacting other organizations such as Community Futures Development Corporation\textsuperscript{15} in Quesnel and Williams Lake, and the Women's Enterprise Network of British Columbia. They all responded favorably to my request and sent out my recruitment advertisement. The third channel that I used was placing a newspaper advertisement in the three local newspapers. The fourth channel was a snowballing method whereby participants gave my contact information to other possible participants who then contacted me.

The time frame for this project and its intended research scope did not allow for the acquisition of enough participants to create a statistically representative sample. While effort was made to contact as many female entrepreneurs as possible, I originally aimed to recruit at least 15 participants and in total secured 18. The selection of the participants did adhere to the self-employment definition set out in the framework.

\textbf{Results}

All attempts have been made to write this section so as to not break confidentiality and so that those interviewed could not easily be identified. One way to avoid possible identification issues is to not indicate the community of the participants when expressing their viewpoints and their experiences. The majority of the participants lived within the municipal boundaries of Quesnel, Williams Lake, and One Hundred Mile House. There were a number of participants who indicated that they lived in the outlying areas around these communities.

\textsuperscript{15} The Community Futures Network was established in 1986 by the federal government in response to the severe economic and labour market changes faced by rural Canadian communities. Over the last 20 years Community Futures in BC has played a significant role in entrepreneurial and community development. Comprised of 34 locally and strategically positioned organizations, the BC Community Futures Network has a significant impact on the socio-economic development and diversification of the rural communities it serves. For more information please go to their website http://www.communityfutures.ca/provincial/bc/index.html
communities. The distribution among the three areas is as follows: One Hundred Mile House-7 participants; Williams Lake-2 participants; and Quesnel-8 participants.

Demographics

Age Level

The age distribution of participants is presented in Table 5. The largest age group with 75% of the participants in the study is women over the age of 50. Within this 75%, three women were between the ages of 50-55, five women where between the ages of 56-59, and five were between the ages of 60-65.

Table 5. Age Distribution of the Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20-29 years</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>46-49 years</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-35 years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50-55 years</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-39 years</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>56-69 years</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-45 years</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>60-65 years</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Martial Status, Spouses Employment, Children

The majority of the women are currently married or co-habiting. A few women indicated that they are divorced or separated, while there were at least two participants who indicated that they are single. There were a number of participants who indicated that their marital status at the creation of their business was lone-parents. Of these participants there was only one case where the participant is still currently a lone-mother, as the other participants indicated they had remarried.

16 Since one participant did not complete the questionnaire, the total for the age distribution is 17 instead of 18.
**Education Levels**

The education levels ranged from completion of grade 9 and higher to having completed a university graduate degree. There was one participant that had completed a Master's level degree. There was one participant that had completed a Bachelor's level degree. There were two participants that had a college diploma, and one participant that had a trade diploma. There were a number of participants that had completed high school in addition to completing some post-secondary level coursework, but did not complete a program. The education distribution of the participants is outlined in Table 6.

Table 6. Education Level of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level Distribution</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
<th>Education level</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade 9 or Higher</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>College Diploma</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 10-12 non-graduate</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>University Degree (Bachelor)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Graduate</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>University Degree (Professional)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Post-Secondary</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>University Degree (Master)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade Certificate or Diploma</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>University Degree (Doctoral)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Business**

**Industry**

The service industry was the main choice for the majority of the participants. The women were involved in a variety of services from a cappuccino bar, a small publishing company, general contracting, to a costume rental business. The distribution of the types of self-employment activities is outlined in Table 7. While the service industry is the majority type of business, there are a few women who had businesses related to the resource sector.
One woman is involved with a management consulting services directed at the mining industry, while another woman is a partner in a cattle ranch.

Table 7. Types of Self-Employment Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Self-Employment Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mining Consulting Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Planner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online/Internet Marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artist/Crafts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yoga Instructor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music Studio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driving School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cattle Ranch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graphic Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chocolates and Desserts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Contracting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cappuccino Bar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bookstore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Services Consulting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tax Preparation Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publishing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costume Rentals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtual Office Assistant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the most part, the women are creating businesses instead of purchasing new and existing businesses as an entry route into self-employment. Over 80% of the women created their existing businesses. There was only one instance of a participant purchasing a franchise. Another participant is a partner in a previous business and then purchased the equipment for the business when the other partner wanted to retire, while another purchased an existing business. Another participant took on a dual role of an agent as well as an owner of an agency. When she approached the Vancouver based company about becoming a commission based agent she asked if she could establish an agency in her town.

The majority of the businesses are unincorporated (15 of the 18 participants). There is one participant where only part of her self-employed income was categorized under the definition of incorporated. This situation was described earlier in the previous paragraph where the participant had income from commission-based sales as well as an agency owner. The financial company is incorporated but the person is not, and declares self-employment.
income\textsuperscript{17}. While the rate of unincorporated businesses is high among the participants not all
of the businesses are home-based.

**Involvement in Self-Employment**

The length of current involvement in self-employment ranged from 6 months to over 20 years. In fact, over 57\% of the participants have been involved in their current business for over 6 years. There were only two participants that indicated that they were new to self-employment and had only been in business for less than a year. Please see Figure 5 for the distribution of the length of involvement in self-employment.

**Figure 5. Involvement in Self-Employment**

![Involvement in Self-Employment](image)

There were eight participants who had previous entrepreneurial experience prior to their current businesses. The previous experience falls into two categories: the first is a business venture in the same community; and the second is a business venture in a different community. Three women indicated that they had previous periods of self-employment in the same communities where they are currently living. There do not appear to be strong

\textsuperscript{17}This case could be defined as a dependent contractor. The person declares self-employed income, however the total amount of her income does rely on her relationship with one company.
linkages between their previous self-employment area and their current area. One participant had a secretarial business in the downtown area of the community for nine years and now has established a publishing business in her home. Another participant worked as a seamstress from home when her children were growing up and in school, until she started working as an administrative assistant from home. Another participant worked part-time as a consultant providing conflict resolution and mediation training prior to moving to online marketing.

Five women indicated previous self-employment periods prior to their relocation to their current communities. Most of these women were previously located in larger urban centers, however, there is one woman who had previously lived in a smaller resource-dependent community in the British Columbia Interior. This participant had purchased her franchise in this community and purchased another franchise when she moved to the Cariboo Regional District community. Another women had started an exporting business, while another owned and ran a successful gas bar and country grocery store. One of the participants indicated that her exposure to her family’s business as a child growing up gave her the confidence of knowing that she could start her own.

**Income**

Income from self-employment has an interesting distribution. Only seven of the participants rely totally on self-employment income. This is approximately 38% of the participants. The remaining eleven participants supplement their income with other forms of paid employment. Self-employment income ranged from 10% to 45% of a person’s total employment. One participant indicated that she is not taking any income from her business as she uses all the profits to reinvest and grow her business. This same person indicated that she works two other part-time jobs on top of her business. Another participant indicated that
she was not taking any income from her business, and was reinvesting profits, however her income was coming from the self-employment benefits program.

The percentage of their self-employment income as a part of the total family income ranged, from 10% to 75%. However, the majority indicated a percentage less than 50%. Only one participant indicated that her self-employment income comprised 75% of the total family income. One participant indicated that the self-employment income from her business was the total family income. In this case, the participant's spouse also worked full-time at the business.

Only eight participants answered questions regarding their net income levels for 2007\(^\text{18}\). The net income levels ranged from very small at $4,500 to $110,000. However, the majority of the net income levels were below $50,000. At the beginning of the research most of the participants did not want to indicate information regarding their income levels, though they were willing to give information regarding self-employment income as a percentage of their income and their total family income.

**Financing**

The women in these resource-dependent communities used a variety of financing methods for starting their businesses. Three of the women indicated that they used two different financing methods, a commercial bank loan and personal credit. One person indicated that they only used a commercial bank loan. Two participants indicated that they used government funds through self-employment benefits. One person indicated that they only used personal credit. The majority of the women indicated that they used another type of financing other than those listed on the questionnaire form (i.e. commercial bank loan, personal credit).

\(^{18}\) Net income was collected for the tax year 2007. Many of the participants were still in the process of completing their 2008 tax returns.
community loan fund, government loan fund, and personal credit). These women did not give specific information about the other financing type.

Motivations

The participants were asked to indicate the importance of the different push/pull/family motivations as their reasons for being self-employed. They were asked to indicate very important, somewhat important, or not at all important on 15 different motivations. The distribution of their answers is outlined in Table 8. The distribution of the “very important” motivations is heavily weighted to those motivations that are considered the classical pull motivations, as well as the family motivations. However there are a few people that did indicate the desire for independence, challenging work, and having responsibility were not at all important for them.
Table 8. Distribution of Motivations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distribution of Motivations</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Somewhat Important</th>
<th>Not at all important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pull Desire for Independence 14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenging Work 12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having Responsibility 7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better Income 5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible Schedule 13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Work Environment 13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire for Meaningful Work 14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making a difference in local community 9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Push No other Job Opportunity 4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Loss 5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contracting out by past employer 0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouses Job Loss 0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Business 1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to work from home 9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work-Family Balance 7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Other 2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An interesting point is discovered through an examination of the correlation between the different motivations. There is evidence that the participants did not see the motivations as an “and or” situation which is often how it is described in the push-pull debate. Some of the women that selected very important for the motivations of ‘job loss’ and ‘no other job opportunity’ also selected very important for the motivations of ‘desire for independence’ and ‘challenging work’. This indicates that some women are pushed into self-employed because of external factors, but also they are pulled in with internal motivations.

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19 Since one participant did not complete the questionnaire, the total for each motivation is 17 instead of 18.
Pull Motivations

As described above, the pull motivations are the prominent motivations that are discussed when the participants were asked to describe the motivations that they choose as ‘very important’.

Desire for Independence

The desire for independence was a motivator in the participants’ reason for being self-employed. This was the motivator that most of the participants chose to discuss first. “The number one motivator for me, was the desire for independence….In starting my business, I was able to bring my skills out of captivity with one employer and went on the open market” (Participant). Another participant commented, “I have a hard time working for owners of other businesses. I complete a lot more work than they do and they only pay me $8 an hour. Keeping quiet is not my forte, so that is where being independent comes in handy” (Participant). Another participant commented “you are not really independent when you are stuck in a office working by yourself. You don’t have the freedom to do what you really want to do” (Participant).

Responsibility

The majority of the participants responded favorably to having responsibility. One participant commented, “having responsibility wasn’t an issue. I have always had lots of responsibility” (Participant). Another participant explained that she enjoyed the responsibility that came with her business. “I am responsible for everything that happens. I make the decisions and the choices for the business” (Participant).
Better Income

Many of the women indicated that better income was a motivating factor in their self-employment venture, though it was not the most important factor for everyone. Income was only ‘very important’ to five of the participants, while eight participants indicated it was ‘somewhat important’, and five participants indicated it was ‘not at all important’.

There was evidence of a different reason for wanting a better income that has relations to resource dependency. One woman explained that the importance of her business income was in relation to her spouse’s retirement income. The participant stated that “better income was number 1+”. She explained that her husband had worked in the local forest industry for over 48 years and for 25 years his company did not have a pension plan. The income that she makes from her business helps with compensating for the years that he did not have a pension and helps to pay for medical benefits and healthcare. She also indicated that she often employs her husband within the business.

Positive Work Environment

Having a positive work environment was selected as an important motivation for all of the women. Some of the women indicated that it was ‘very important’ while others said it was ‘somewhat important’. There were a few participants who described that creating a more positive work environment was an influential factor in their reason to become self-employed. In one case, the woman was experiencing a stressful and time-consuming work environment. In another case the woman was experiencing working in an awkward environment were a family business was splitting up. In both of these cases the women were coping with negative work environments and decided that they could make it better for themselves by doing the same work as an outside consultant. In both cases, the women’s
previous employers were their first contracting clients, however their businesses have expanded to include additional clients.

In one woman’s interview she explained that being a self-employed consultant gave her a more positive work environment, along with the ability to control the level of responsibility that she had over her projects. “Resource companies are very demanding. In the job that I had, I reported to the President and the Board of five publicly traded companies. Anything that went wrong at the job site the buck stopped at me whether it was my responsibility or not, or if it had anything to do with the project. I would get phone calls at 4 or 5 o’clock in the morning with someone screaming and swearing at me. After five years I had enough. I never get phone calls in the middle of the night now. My clients send me flowers and thank you cards because they are grateful that I keep their operations going and I am not a full-time employee. I don’t have to take that crap anymore” (Participant). This participant also indicated that “had the circumstances with my job and my employer were different I would have stayed therefore ever” (Participant.)

Making a difference in the local community

The majority of the participants indicated a strong desire to help their local communities and they expressed that they felt there was a need in the community. One participant claimed that it was “the opportunity to help people that was the most important motivator” (Participant). Another participant felt that her business brought a valuable service to the community and opens up an empty meeting room for use by non-profit organizations. Another participant claimed that while making a difference in the community was not her motivation to start with, she has since start donating her products to be used by non-profit organizations to be sold to raise money for the organizations. Another participant in her
previous secretarial business helped a number of people gain valuable work experience through unpaid work experience in her office so that they could then move on to securing paid employment.

**Push Motivations**

**Unemployment**

A small number of the participants indicated that one of their main reasons for becoming self-employed was because of a job loss. One of the participants indicated that she was laid off from her administrative position as a secretary when the real estate business in the community slowed down. A number of participants indicated that they had become unemployed because of health related issues.

**Spousal Unemployment**

The questionnaire around motivation did provide evidence that spousal unemployment was ‘somewhat important’ in their reasons for being self-employed. However there was no evidence provided in the face-face interview that it was an initial cause. The majority of the women indicated that their husbands did not experience periods of unemployment. However, there were a few incidences of spousal unemployment. One woman explained that her husband was laid off for a period of one year when the local forest industry downsized but at that time her business had already started.

While spousal unemployment was not a contributing factor to the entry decision, the participants’ spouses did impact their business. In a number of cases, the participants’ spouses provided needed labour for their business. In one participant’s case, her spouse was the main subcontractor. In another participant’s case her spouse worked full-time in the
business while another participant’s spouse worked part-time. There were two cases where the spouses’ employment had initially impacted their decision for relocating to the area. In one participant’s case she had been previously running a franchise and sold the business upon relocating. Another participant indicated that because of the existence of her spouse’s employment it allowed her to guard against the risk of failure when beginning her home based business. She commented “his employment was nice and safe” (Participant).

Limited Employment Options

The participants were placed into two groups: those that recently moved to the area and those that have lived in the area for a long time. One of the participants expressed her thoughts about relocating to her current community and the lack of available employment opportunities. “Fortunately, I found out when I interviewed for a part-time position, through the women interviewing that there weren’t many women up here who were working just one job. Most of the work was part-time. Women would work two days at this job and three days at another job. I didn’t like the idea of not being able to focus on one job. That did not appeal to me” (Participant). The participant also then expressed frustration with the ability to find equivalent work for her experience and educational level. “I had been a supervisor for years so I was used to being in a leadership role. Starting over in a new community it would be difficult for me to find a supervisory position. So that was a big factor in my decision” (Participant).

When asked if another participant would close her business if a paid employment option appeared, she commented that she already tried that. She did take up employment but she could not get full-time. “You cannot get 40 hours a week anymore” (Participant). This same participant had indicated her desire for self-employment was in part to alleviate the
boredom, as she did not have enough to do in the day. The participant also sold products through a direct selling company as well as operated a hay ranch with her spouse. This participant had also moved to the area, although, it was over 15 years ago.

The employment history of the long time residents provides a good picture of the employment options presented to them prior to self-employment. One long time resident indicated, that prior to her current business, she had several part-time jobs in the social services field, one of which was contracting her services as a mediator. Another long-time resident indicated that prior to her current business and her previous business, she held full-time employment as a secretary, however she indicated that she worked part-time when her children where younger. Another resident indicated that she previously held full-time employment in a variety of commission based sales and advertising jobs.

**Occupational Segregation**

There were four incidents where the women had worked in the local resource industry. One woman worked as a contract carpenter, another worked as a general labourer in mill, one woman worked as an administrative temp part-time, while another women worked as a manager in a mine. The remaining women indicated that they had never attempted to find employment within the local resource industry. For the most of the women employment in the local industry was never a consideration in their employment plans. One long time resident of Quesnel indicated that while she had no desire to work in the local forest industry, she felt that she would have been hired.

Of the women who were employed in the local industry they did not become unemployed because of economic restructuring; instead their reason for leaving was because of health issues. One of the women indicated that her health issues were related to her
employment. Another woman indicated that while her health related issue was not because of the work environment it did not allow her to continue the duties of her trade. She had been in a car accident and damaged her back.

**Geographical Isolation**

The women were not actively seeking employment in other communities prior to starting their businesses. When a Quesnel woman was asked if she had considered commuting to the larger community of Prince George, she indicated that it would be too dangerous because of the road conditions in the winter. “The driving conditions would not be worth going to work”(Participant). Another participant who indicated that she might have to seek out paid employment to help supplement her newly formed business and indicated explained that she had never thought about commuting. Another participant indicated that it would be an absolute last resort to commute for employment opportunities.

There were two women who had moved to their respective communities to start their businesses. Both women had conducted market research prior to moving and had felt that their businesses would be successful in the communities. The participants saw a need in the communities that they could fill, as well as they growth potential.

The majority of the women indicated a strong desire to remain in their communities as well as to remain in their current businesses. When asked what the likelihood would be of closing their business if a paid employment option would appear the women answered out right no and said that the paid employment would have to be a dream job. The women that did indicate that they would take paid employment also indicated they would retain their existing businesses.
A few women indicated that they are in the process of expanding their business. One participant was thinking about franchising her cappuccino bar while another participant was expanding her driving school to another community. One participant was in the process of increasing her education and training in the health and wellness field so that she could bring those skills to her community.

**Family Motivations**

**Work-Family Balance**

The desire for work-family business was 'very important' and 'somewhat important' to the large majority of the participants. In one participant’s case the ability to work from home allowed her to home school her child and provide much needed income, as she was a lone-mother. Another participant indicated that working from home allowed her to help out with her ailing spouse. While another participant indicated that working from home allowed her to maintain her country home, as her spouse was employed in northeastern British Columbia.

Working from home also enabled a number of women to work and stay home with their children. One participant indicated that she worked her business around her spouse’s work schedule so that she did not have to take her children to daycare. This participant and her spouse felt that it was important for one of them to be home while their children were growing up. She had decided to stay home and work around her husband’s schedule. She explained that if had she went to work after having children and continued to work the 60 hours a week prior to children, her spouse would have needed to stay home.

Working from home was also a desired motivation for women that did not have young children at home. In one participant’s case, while she wanted to work for home, it was
not feasible at this time. “I live 12 kilometers outside of the town and there is no reliable Internet connection. That is very frustrating for me” (Participant).

The participant who partnered in a ranch commented that she had been offered the opportunity to work at home in a different industry using her computer science background, but instead turned it down because it would mean that her husband would need to be at home more. This option was not feasible as her spouse’s paid employment was a source of needed income and therefore she chose not to take the opportunity.

**Access to Childcare**

The topic of childcare availability did not appear as a topic of discussion in any of the interviews. However, the majority of the women did indicate that they took time off of work to raise their children. Most of these women indicated that they did not want to work while raising their children. And for those participants that did work while raising their children, the majority only worked part time.

**Other motivations**

A motivation that has not previously been revealed in the literature was found in this research. One participant commented that one of the reasons that she decided to become self-employed was a way to regain her self-esteem after a marriage breakup. The self-employment option was something that she came upon after taking a course for older-workers that was being offered through the Community Futures Development Corporation in her area.
Conclusion

Summary of Results

Women in resource-dependent communities are choosing self-employment as an employment option. Their reasons for entering self-employment are varied and include the spectrum of push, pull, and family motivations.

The evidence confirms that in making their decisions to become entrepreneurs, women in the resource-dependent communities are primarily motivated by pull dimensions. Many of the women subscribed to the motivations of challenging work, independence and autonomy, and creating a positive work environment. Creating a positive work environment in this case can be described as a reactionary measure rather than proactive action. The dimension was about gaining control over certain aspects of their work environment that were previously controlled by their employers.

The desire for meaningful work did take on the different meaning of making a difference in their local community as hypothesized. For the majority of the women who indicated this desire, they felt strongly that they were filling a need in the community. “The town needed a place to get a good cup of coffee” (Participant). “Helping people is the most important reason” (Participant). “Where would local authors who want to publish their work go in a small community?” (Participant). In a number of cases, filling a need in the community through their self-employment is part of the participants’ reasons for relocating to these communities.

The evidence also confirms that women in resource-dependent communities are also motivated by unemployment. The evidence, however, did not support the hypothesis that
unemployment is more prevalent for the women in these communities compared to women in urban areas. The women, who previously worked in the local resource industry, cited that their main reason for unemployment is because of health issues. While the economic restructuring in the resource industry is not found in this study to motivate entry, there is evidence that it could still be a factor in the entry decision. One of the women indicated that prior to her health issues, she had experienced many periods of unemployment related to the different economic cycles and previous restructuring in the industry. She shared that her switch into self-employment gave her more security. “A place that I can go to everyday. Rather than sitting at home wondering about if I will find employment today; a little bit of security” (Participant).

There is no evidence to suggest that spousal unemployment impacted the entry decision. There are very few instances of spousal unemployment. In these cases, spouses’ unemployment is not a causal factor as the women were already self-employed when their spouses became unemployed. The loss of the primary income did impact their business, however the impact is different between the participants. The difference of the impact on their business appears to be related to their spouses’ work status prior to the period of unemployment. One was a regular paid employee who was able to collect employment insurance while another was self-employed and was not able to collect employment insurance. In the latter instance, the woman indicated that this happened in the very earlier stages of her business, and she and her spouse had to rely on the business income and her self-employment benefits. In both cases, the women’s self-employment did provide some income support during the period of the loss of the primary income.

20 In both cases, their spouses had become unemployed because of restructuring and a downturn in the resource industry.
There is a small amount of evidence to support the existence of the underemployment dimension. A few of the participants specifically indicated that they could not find suitable paid employment as well as suitable full-time employment. This dimension could also be understood through the fact that many of the women still worked at other part-time employment at the same time as their self-employment.

The women that participated in the study did not experience occupational segregation with respect to the local resource industries in their communities. The women that sought out employment in the local resource industry were successfully hired. These women held employment in a variety of areas within the industry, from secretary, general labourer, and tradesperson to management. The absence of occupational segregation in this study does not provide any confirmation that the process has been dissolved. For the majority of the women, working in the local resource industry is not a consideration in their employment options and plans. This “lack of interest” in the local industry could be related to the research completed by Reed in which she explored the idea that women’s employment choices are part of a complex network that is embedded in their understanding of paid work in local practices and meanings (Reed 2003). In her concluding statement, Reed states her approach “calls for a dual focus lens, one that draws attention to the social embeddedness of women’s lives in local norms and networks that reinforce their role identity and a second lens that illustrates how the women’s attachment to the dominate occupational community has reinforced a workingman’s culture… I suggest that through discourse and practice, women are co-creators of the forestry culture and communities that provide the openings and closures for women in the male work of forestry” (Reed 2003:387).
The women living in these communities enjoy their local areas and have no strong desire to leave the region and find employment elsewhere. There was no desire to commute or relocate to another community or region to find employment. The geographical isolation of these communities, as well as the climate, does negatively impact the ability to commute for employment. These conditions are quite different than in smaller communities and resource communities that are closer to large urban centers and have temperate climates that would enable people to easily commute for employment. One participant explained that prior to moving to her new location she had lived elsewhere in southeastern British Columbia, where she lived in a small rural community and commuted for work in another community. She indicated that her reason for commuting was because there was no employment in her occupational field in the town where she was residing.

Women in resource-dependent communities are entering self-employment as a response to their family structure and family responsibilities. For a number of women self-employment has given them the ability to earn an income and to meet their family responsibilities. The family responsibilities involved in this research included child rearing, home schooling, and caring for ailing spouses.

When the individual stories of why the women became self-employed are reviewed, they add weight to entry decision complexity and also provide evidence to support the idea that the push, pull debate may be more than just a continuum where entry has just one placement. In a number of cases, some of the women that were pulled into self-employment were not actively seeking self-employment as an employment option. Instead, an opportunity presented itself and they made a decision to act.
Women in resource-dependent communities are utilizing their existing skills and previous knowledge in creating their businesses. These women are actively creating situations where they are able to capitalize on their skills and in turn benefit their communities. This creation process is important and should be included in the resource-dependent literature to complement the information on the motivations and employment options.

**Significance**

**Pushed or Pulled or Family?**

In response to the initial research question, the results provide evidence that there was a higher presence of the pull motivations, compared to other motivations, among women in resource-dependent communities. Women in these communities were also more likely to be motivated by family than by push motivations. This evidence corresponds to the evidence that has been found in other research on entry and women in urban centres. Unemployment was not the most prevalent dimension for the women; however, there was evidence to show that underemployment and health issues were causal factors in the decision-making process. The evidence therefore shows that women in resource-dependent communities have the same motivations for entry as their urban counterparts. However, there is also a small amount of evidence to show that the dimensions may take on different meanings and may also include new dimensions. The similarities between the two groups (resource dependent and urban) are related to the commonly discussed entry dimensions, such as challenging work, desire for independence, positive work environment, and unemployment. While, the differences between the two groups appear to be related to the difference in the economic dependence and gender dimensions. The underemployment dimension is present because of the structure
of the resource-dependent communities and this causes women in these communities to also have different dimensions than women in urban areas.

**Typology**

Hughes' typology of *Classic, Work/Family and Forced Entrepreneurs* is not able to completely describe the self-employed women in resource-dependent communities. There are a few who would fit in the Classic category, as they had higher incomes, operated traditional businesses and were incorporated employing others. However, the higher human capital part of this category is only found in one instance. The most prominent category that could be used to describe a majority of the participants is the Forced Entrepreneur. There were many participants who have low incomes and unincorporated home-based business with no employees. However, the participants do not meet all of the specifications for this category, as many of them are not new or recent entrants, and many of them were not previously unemployed. This research instead indicates that Forced for women in resource-dependent communities took on a different meaning. In this category forced became the need to rely on other income sources as many of the participants had both paid and self-employment.

**Limitations**

**Framework**

The framework that I created for this project did enable me to find evidence that women in resource-dependent communities are affected by the same motivations as their urban counterparts. It also enabled me to find evidence that these women were motivated by other motivations. The framework enabled the research to show that desire for meaningful work took on a meaning of *making a difference in the local community*. It also enabled me to
find evidence of underemployment, a new dimension that may only be important for women in resource-dependent communities. Participants are frustrated by the challenge of securing full-time employment and securing employment that match their education and skill level. There was evidence that these challenges were experienced by a woman who had relocated to a resource-dependent community from an urban area. This evidence also contributes and informs the importance of taking into consideration the diversity among women within the existing entrepreneurship literature.

The evidence of this new dimension, underemployment, is an important contribution to the literature as it provides a new way of explaining the entry process. In this research, women were not asked directly if they considered underemployment as a motivation to enter self-employment. Instead, the framework included underemployment as an integrative dimension that was present only if the various factors were evident. This is different than other entry studies where the focus of investigation is on reviewing one specific factor within a dimension.

Since I had determined the factors that were included in the underemployment dimension, it does lead to a researcher bias. Therefore, the dimension may only be evident because of how I, the researcher, constructed the dimension. I constructed the dimension with the information that was found in the literature on resource dependence and women regarding the lack of full-time employment, higher educational attainment, and occupational segregation.

An aspect of the framework that was limiting was that it did not take into consideration that some of the women had recently relocated to their communities instead of being long-time residents. This limitation may be important considering most of the
participants who were categorized in the underemployed dimension had relocated to the community. Most of the participants that had relocated had higher human capital and also had predominately held full-time employment prior to relocating. Therefore the underemployment dimension could be more prevalent for the relocating group instead of the long time residents.

Methodology

The methodology used in this research did limit the ability to explain the story behind the main motivator in the entry decision on a larger scope. The quantitative question did not allow for the participants to rank one motivation overall; instead the question focused on rating each individual motivator for its importance in the decision. There were two qualitative questions that enabled the study to gain more information about which of the outlined motivations from the quantitative section the participants desired more than another.

There were two issues with the qualitative questions. The first issue was that it is not clear if the desire for independence was often commented on first because it was the most important factor or because it was the first motivation listed in the quantitative questionnaire. There were a number of participants that did indicate one motivation over another as their main factor when describing the different motivations. The second issue is that the selection of the motivations appeared to be ambiguous when explaining if it was a desire prior to entry or if the desire began after the decision was made. While the participants where asked if the motivations were the reasons as to why they became self-employed, their stories of how they entered their business often detailed other reasons. For example, two participants who selected and discussed the desire for independence, and how other pull motivations were ‘very important’ to them, also explained that the reason they were self-employed at the
moment was because of an opportunity. One participant commented, “the opportunity fell into my lap. I wasn’t looking for self-employment the opportunity came to me” (Participant).

Participants

The high percentage of participants over the age of 50 may have limited the ability of the study to investigate aspects in a number of the dimensions. Most of the women in this age range did not emphasis the demands of the primary care giver role and the flexibility around their spouse as motivations for entering self-employment because during the entry stage their children where grown. This age range also may have limited the ability to highlight the possibilities of underemployment. Many of the women did not obtain higher education and did not relate this to their inability to find suitable paid employment. This might have been different if the majority of the participants been younger and had completed a post-secondary credential.

Implications for Policy

The main implication for policy that the results indicate is in regards to the self-employment benefits program. The Self-Employment Benefits program is a government program that provides financial assistance to eligible individuals to help them create jobs for themselves by starting a business\textsuperscript{21}. An aspect of the program that should be reviewed is the period of time that the women can access the income benefits of the program. Currently, the time period for most of the self-employment benefit programs is a period of one year\textsuperscript{22}. This research has shown that the majority of self-employed women also have other part-time paid

\textsuperscript{21} For more information on the Self-Employment Benefits Program please go to http://www1.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/epb/sid/cia/grants/self-emp/desc_self-emp.shtml

\textsuperscript{22} http://www1.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/epb/sid/cia/grants/self-emp/desc_self-emp.shtml
employment. This could indicate that it may take longer periods of time to make their businesses viable. Taking on part-time employment could also affect the amount of time and energy that the women have to focus on their businesses. Inability to be flexible and open in their daily schedule could impact on the length of time required to make their business viable. Extending self-employment benefits for a longer period of time, may allow the women to keep the same amount of time and energy on their business, which could in turn help to positively impact the time needed for the business to become viable. Possible ideas for extending the program could take the form of extended time, as well as reviewing the amount given to the women. The program could be extended for a longer period but at a reduced rate. The rate could be set up on a scale system whereby the amount received could be reduced by the amount they receive for their self-employment income. Creating a transitional period could be very significant in the sustainability of the women’s self-employment.

In conjunction with the transitional period described above another policy implication would be to review the ability for women to access financial support for childcare. Many of the women in this research indicated that they were lone-mothers at the time that they became self-employed. Winn describe the importance of reviewing policy related to lone-mothers, “as an increasing number of families are headed by single mothers, women’s economic status becomes not only an economic concern, but a social concern as well” (Winn 2005:382). The Self-Employment Benefits Program does allow for the women to access and receive help for childcare but that is only if they women are eligible for the program. The possibility exists that some of the women may not be eligible for the program.
Implications for Future Research

This study provides a well laid out foundation for further research. There are many facets of the research that could be explored independently as well as to be taken into consideration in a larger study. There are number of areas that potential researchers should explore and acknowledge when completing research for women in resource-dependent communities. One area that should be explored is the dynamics between the two groups of women that appeared in the research: those that lived in the area a long time prior to self-employment and those that relocated to the area for their self-employment. This project does provide some indication that the two groups may have different motivations and reasons for starting their businesses. The project found that women who had relocated to the area may be more positively motivated by underemployment than those women who already lived in the communities.

One extension of this research could be to include information regarding the main reasons for relocation and their previous geographical area. In this project, some women moved from urban areas while others moved from similar sized areas. Research could be conducted to understand if women moving from urban areas experience difference motivations then those who have lived in similar resource-dependent communities prior to relocating.

Further research on female self-employment in resource-dependent communities should factor in the importance and relevance of the spouses’ employment. There are a number of different dynamics occurring in this project with respect to the spouses’ employment. Spousal employment provides much needed security to help reduce the risk of failure. In this project, the spouses’ income is still the primary family income. Spouses can
also provide much needed labour for the women’s self-employment activities. It would therefore, be important for researchers to get a complete picture of spousal type of employment as well as their industry. This information would allow for researchers to investigate how differences in the spousal employment and industry could impact the women both during their entry decision and during the course of their self-employment. Bruce has conducted research on the importance of having a self-employed spouse in the household (Bruce 1999). His empirical study found that “a non-working or wage and salary wife is nearly twice as likely to enter self-employment in any year where her spouse was self-employed in the previous year” (Bruce 1999:324).

Another area that should be examined in the future in the area of urban, rural, and resource-dependent communities female self-employment is to investigate if there are any self-employment income level disparities. This is an important area to be reviewed given that the large majority of the participants also held paid employment alongside their self-employment. If disparities do exist it could highlight how the economic dependence of a community could impact self-employment income levels.

When reviewing income disparity an important research segment that needs to be addressed are barriers to entry for female entrepreneurship in resource-dependent communities. These women may face different or similar challenges than their urban counterparts. Access to financing has often been described as barrier to entry for female entrepreneurs (Winn 2005). There was a small indication that some of the women in these communities are financing their business through other means than traditional commercial financing, personal lines of credit, and government programs.
Future research on the economic significances of female entrepreneurship in resource-dependent communities would be a great asset to the research literature as well as community development literature and work. Showcasing the economic value that female entrepreneurship brings to a community could provide motivation for other women to become entrepreneurs. Future research, analysis and identification indicators would provide an understanding of how vital female entrepreneurship is to the communities. There is a need to add to the work completed by Marchak (1983), Reed (2003), and Haiseth and Ryser (2004) about the value of paid and unpaid female labour that would highlight the value that female self-employment contributes to these communities. In many resource-dependent communities, female entrepreneurship provides important services, meeting needs that are being underserved, and employment for other community members as well as, contributing to economic diversification.
Bibliography


Appendix I: Questionnaire

To start, I would appreciate getting your responses to the following two questions. There will be an opportunity to discuss these questions in more detail in the interview:

1) In terms of your reasons for being self-employed, could you indicate how important each of these are to you?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Somewhat Important</th>
<th>Not at all important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Desire for Independence</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenging Work</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having Responsibility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better Income</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible Schedule</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to work from home</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work-Family Balance</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No other Job Opportunity</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Loss</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contracting out by past employer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Business</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Work Environment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire for Meaningful Work</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouses Job Loss</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making a difference in local community</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to provide summary statistics for my study, I would appreciate it if you could provide a few details about yourself and your business. This information will be used for summary purposes only and will be kept strictly confidential.

About yourself

1. Year of Birth: __________

2. Country of Birth: __________

3. Highest Level of Education (check one)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade 9 or Higher</th>
<th>College Diploma</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grades 10-12 non-graduate</td>
<td>University Degree (Bachelor)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Martial Status (check one)
   - Single
   - Married/Cohabiting
   - Sep/Divorced
   - Widowed

   If you are married/cohabiting, what is your partner's work status:
   - Paid Employee
   - Self-Employed
   - Unemployed
   - Retired

5. Do you have any children?  
   - Yes
   - No

   If you have children, how many? __
   What ages? ____________________________

About your current business:

1. How long have you been self-employed in your current business? ________ years

2. Is your current business (check one)
   - A new business you created
   - An existing business you purchased
   - A family business
   - Other

3. Is your current business (check one)
   - Incorporated
   - Unincorporated

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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>70,000-79,999</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>80,000-plus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

4. Could you indicate your approximate net income for 2007? ________

5. Approximately what percentage of your own income comes from your current business? ________

6. Approximately what percentage of your family income comes from your current business? ________
7. Have you used any of the following to finance your current business?
   A commercial bank loan ______
   A community loan fund ______
   A government loan fund ______
   Personal credit eg (Visa) ______
   None of these ______
   Thank you very much for providing this information.

Appendix II: Participant One-on-One Interview Questions

1. To begin, could you tell me a bit of about your work and education history prior to starting a business- I am interested in knowing about your education and other types of self-employment or paid employment you were involved with prior to this business. Check:

   Self-employment in other business? If yes, type of business, how long?
   Paid employment for someone else? If yes type of job? How long? Was the job full-time or part-time?
   Periods of unemployment? If yes, for how long?
   Husband’s unemployment? If yes, for how long? What was the reason for being unemployed?
   Periods of time to raise a family/or for education? If yes how long
   Did you try to find employment within the local industry? If yes, what was the result?

2. Can you tell me about how you came involved in your current business?
   Was there a desire to help your local community?
   Can you tell me about your business...

3. In terms of your involvement in this business is it your main source of work, or are you involved in other jobs or businesses as well?

   I’ve already asked you to indicated some reasons of why you are self-employed (on information sheet) and I’d like to discuss this more with you now

4. Of the reasons that are very important to you, could you tell me more about why they are important to you...
   Do you consider that these reasons are why you became self-employed?
   Are there other reasons that are not mentioned on the information sheet that you feel where important in your decision to become self-employed?
   ..........If married, did your spouses employment impact your decision to enter self-employment? If so, how did it impact? Does your spouses employment currently impact your business?
5. What would be the likelihood of you closing your business if a paid employment option appears?

   Have you thought about moving to a different location (city or town) for employment?