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Gender Equality of Japanese Women in Interracial Marriage

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ABSTRACT

This study applied a qualitative approach to explore five Japanese women’s experiences and perceptions of gender equality in interracial marriage, with a primary focus on identifying common factors that affected their experiences. A new trend of interracial marriage among Japanese has emerged in recent years. Although the phenomenon of interracial marriages between Japanese women and Caucasian men has started after World War II, recent studies interpret this trend as a new phenomenon symbolizing feminist movement toward women’s emancipation from a male-dominated society. These women’s experiences have not been fully investigated.

This study employed a multiple-case study method with semi-structured interviews to explore the five women’s experiences as well as to identify factors contributing to their experiences. The emerging areas of experiences relevant to gender equality were divided into four different domains: (1) gender role, (2) finances and decision-making, (3) culture and language, and (4) personal power. Factors that contributed to these participants’ experiences in these four domains were summarized into five categories: (a) gender role beliefs, (b) financial and cultural resources, (c) socio-cultural factors, (d) personal-psychological factors, and (e) husband’s attitudes. The participants’ experiences in each domain were influenced by a combination of different factors under these five categories with individual variations. The amount of significance attached to each factor varied from one participant to another. The final results of this study were compared against three major theories of gender equality: i.e., ideology theory, resource theory and process theory. The implications for theories, future research, and counselling are discussed.
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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

According to Kelsky (1996a), a new trend has emerged in Japan since the early 1990's where more and more young Japanese women choose to go to the West to pursue emancipation and to find a "new self". These Japanese women's contacts with the West often lead to interracial marriage with Western men (Kelsky, 1996a). Kelsky (1994, 1996a, 1996b) conducted a series of studies with this particular population in terms of their encounters with the West. She concluded that the actions of these young Japanese women were motivated by a so-called "consciousness gap" in Japanese society. This gap refers to the discrepancy of gender role expectations between Japanese men and women. Many men still insist on maintaining separate roles in keeping with traditions, while women desire for gender equality and new marital relationships. Kelsky interpreted the "internationalism" of these young Japanese women as rebellion against patriarchy and as a postmodern feminist movement.

The phenomenon of young Japanese women moving to the West has also emerged in Canada. According to the statistical data from Citizenship and Immigration Canada (1999), the age distribution of new Japanese immigrants in the past ten years falls mainly between 25 to 34, which indicates a younger immigrant population. There is also a substantial gender difference among these new Japanese immigrants, with the female outnumbering males two to three times. For example, in 1996 the total number of new Japanese female immigrants between the age 20 to 34 is 522, while there are only 134 males from the same age group. These data do not only indicate that there are more female than male Japanese immigrants moving to Canada, but also suggest that many of these Japanese women are either single or
sponsored by their Canadian spouse. With an increasing number of female immigrants, eventually there will be a big gap in the sex ratio of the total Japanese immigrants in Canada. In terms of demography, when one sex outnumbers the other sex in a particular ethnic group, the opportunities of interracial marriage are likely to increase (Hwang, Saenz, & Aguirre, 1994). This means that many of these Japanese women who are in their prime age for marriage have a high chance of entering an interracial marriage.

In her demographic research on new Japanese immigrant women across Canada, Kobayashi (1999) found that the intermarriage rate of this particular population exceeded 90%. Different from the pre-War immigrants, these female immigrants who came to Canada during the 1970s and 1980s were highly educated and the largest proportion was employed in the arts or in human service professions. According to Kobayashi, many of them were from wealthy families and came to Canada to pursue a higher education. After completing their studies, many of them chose to stay in Canada because the high level of patriarchy in Japanese society made it difficult for them to find fulfilling jobs in Japan. Kobayashi viewed the migration of these Japanese women as a "negotiation of gender." Kobayashi’s study also revealed that in the 1990s, the trend of migration among Japanese women continued but the makeup of this population was somehow changed. Many of them immigrated to Canada directly in order to find work. The majority of this population worked in the service industries. Despite differences in family background, education, work professions and the length of stay in Canada, many of these Japanese women immigrants chose interracial marriage.

It is obvious that the trend of pursuing a Western life style is popular among many young Japanese women and the rate of interracial marriage is high among Japanese women
living abroad. For some of these Japanese women, intermarriage might have become an exit for them to escape a traditional gender role demanded by Japanese society, either in the work or home domain. It appears to be a common assumption that an interracial relationship with a Western man or life in Western society will promise a more equal gender relationship. Yet, according to Kobayashi’s (1999) study, some Japanese women find that the degree of patriarchy in Canadian society is not significantly less than it would have been in Japan. In fact, the rate of divorce among Japanese immigrant women is higher than that among Canadian-born women of Japanese descent. As a result, many of these Japanese women have become single mothers and they are in need of adequate social support. Yamada (1993) also reported that Japanese women living in the United States held an even more traditional gender role compared to women who remain in Japan. It appears that Western society or intermarriage may not necessarily promise an egalitarian relationship. On the other hand, Refsing’s (1998) study of Japanese-Danish intermarriage found that Japanese immigrant wives are quite satisfied with the level of equality they acquire in Denmark. They believe that they have acquired a higher level of gender equality than what they might have in Japan. These findings present inconsistent results and there still is a need for further investigation of these Japanese women’s experiences.

**Purpose of this Study**

Previous studies on gender equality often focused on household task divisions and decision-making power, which did not cover the complexity of gender role issues in intermarriage. Those quantitative studies also failed to explore the participants’ subjective experiences in the process of acquiring gender equality. In addition, there are very few studies conducted on the marital equality of intermarried Japanese women (e.g., Kobayashi,
The purpose of this study is to gain insight into what contributes to gender equality in interracial marriage by exploring these Japanese women’s experiences, for future counseling and research implications. Existing theories about gender equality mainly focus on same-race couples, and they may not be sufficient in explaining the gender equality issues in intermarriage, especially for this particular group. Further studies are needed to gather direct evidence from this population in order to test these theories or even to develop a new theoretical framework. However, these existing theories do suggest that factors affecting gender equality in marriage are very complicated, which means that each individual’s experience may vary to a great degree. By applying a multiple case study method, I wish to treat each case as a whole study in order to describe the uniqueness of each participant’s experience. The cross-case analysis in the multiple case study approach will also allow me to reach the ultimate goal of this study – to extract common elements that influence the gender equality among these cases.

Significance of this Study

Gender equality has been identified as a major component that affects marital quality (Bowen & Orthner, 1993; Kamo, 1993; Lye & Biblarz, 1993; Rabin & Shapira-Berman, 1997). However, in interracial marriage studies, gender issues are often overlooked and emphasis is placed on racial issues. It is observed that gender issues often do not come to the surface for negotiation in interracial marriage (Refsing, 1998). As Romano (1997) asserts, gender role issues are tied up with subtle and intangible ideas regarding the meaning of marriage and intimacy, and the necessity of respect, integrity and mutual support. When these issues are not brought to the surface, they may cause underlying power struggles and hinder the achievement of intimacy in a relationship. According to Knudson-Martin (1997),
the recognition of gender issues as a key component in family life has a major impact on family therapy. It increases attention to the experiences of women, raises areas for study that were ignored, and challenges established clinical practices. From a counselling perspective, this study's attempt to identify specific gender role issues in intermarriage will provide insights into future research and counselling practices. From a sociological perspective, this study examines the outcome of a cross-cultural phenomenon that may symbolize one major feminist movement in the pursuit of gender equality.

**Research Questions**

What are intermarried Japanese women's experiences of gender equality in interracial marriage? What are the common elements that affect gender equality in interracial marriage?
CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

**Interruption**

The principle of endogamy, marrying within certain groups is found in all societies, traditional or modern. Marriage generally is most common between partners chosen from a more similar social environment than different (Fang, Sidanius, & Pratto, 1998; Murstein, 1973). Cerroni-Long (1984) defines marriage as a form of exchange and such an exchange is meaningful only when it takes place between two groups that are distinct enough to give reciprocity, but also close enough to partake of similar cultures. Based on these observations and definitions, intermarriage is unusual and beyond the norm. Yet, the phenomenon of intermarriage still occurs in many societies across different cultures despite its unusual nature. Murstein (1973) points out that although it is commonly believed that people are drawn together by the similarities of their characteristics, such as race, education, socioeconomic status, age, previous marital status and religion, these factors do not provide an accurate forecast in marital choice, especially intermarriage. Intermarriage studies have extensively focused on the occurrence of intermarriage, particularly variables that promote it. These studies can be basically divided into three schools: one school focuses on the sociological factors; the second addresses individuals' psychological components, particularly the need for rewards; and the third emphasizes the influence of individual's personality traits.

**Sociological Perspectives**

Sociological perspectives emphasize the social interactions and the environmental influences on the occurrence of intermarriage. Assimilation theory and structural theory are two dominating approaches. Assimilation theorists assert that intermarriage is the final step of assimilation for immigrants to give up their cultural values and to adopt those of the
dominant society. The process of assimilation can take years or even generations; intermarriage is more common among second or third generation immigrants (Hwang et al., Saene & Aguirre, 1994, 1997; Kitano, Yeung, Chai, & Hatanaka, 1984). Intermarriage as a result of assimilation also happens to individuals from minority groups who are highly acculturated or assimilated to the majority culture. Hwang et. al. (1994) point out that as individuals from minority groups learn the majority group’s language, become more educated, enter mainstream voluntary association, and move into prestigious occupations, they no longer set themselves apart from the dominant group. Intermarriage is expected to follow naturally. Structural theorists argue that other community variables are more likely to influence intermarriage opportunities. These variables usually include the size of the minority group, the sex ratio within the group and the geographic distribution of their residence. The more opportunities minority members have to meet their own kind, the lower the rate of intermarriage will be (Hwang, et.al., 1997; Lee & Fernandez, 1998).

Although both the assimilation theory and the structural theory provide some explanations of intermarriage that occurs within a society, they are insufficient in providing answers to the occurrence of cross-national marriage. In cross-national marriage, both partners have fewer opportunities to interact with each other, and the marriage is neither a result of assimilation nor the environmental/population structure of a particular minority group. Both theories also fail to take into account the psychological components that motivate individuals to choose intermarriage.

Psychological Components

The psychological components that affect one’s marital choice vary from one individual to another. Although the reasons people choose intermarriage seem to be
complicated, they basically can be boiled down to satisfying an individual’s needs in some areas. Cerroni-Long (1985) asserts, for intermarriage to happen, certain “effective causes” must exist. Psychological factors often serve as these effective causes. One of the most common constructs in discussing marriage is exchange theory (Glenn, 1990). Exchange theory views marriage as a form of exchange, which is an ongoing process of mutually rewarding activities between a couple. The exchange often refers to socio-cultural or economic rewards. According to exchange theory, each person tries to make social interactions as profitable as possible. They maximize their gains and minimize their losses in all social interactions, including relationships that involve friendship and love (Fu & Heaton, 2000; Murstein, 1973). In order to maximize their personal gain, homogamous marriage is unusually regarded as the best option because individuals are able to provide and exchange equivalent resources (Fu & Heaton, 2000). Based on this argument, it would appear that interracial marriage is less profitable compared to homogamous marriage in terms of the exchange of resources. Then, why are some people still attracted to intermarriage? The most dominating explanation is that race serves as a marital asset and liability in such an exchange.

The racial exchange theory implies that there is a hierarchy of status among different ethnic groups, and members of the minority groups would marry the majority group in order to gain a higher racial status. The rewards they provide for exchange often involve higher education or higher socio-economic status (Fu & Heaton, 2000; Murstein, 1973). Fong and Yung (1996) as well as Hwang et. al. (1997) found that social exchange does serve as a factor that promotes intermarriage for Asian Americans. Hwang et. al. (1997) found that Asian Americans often have higher education than their Caucasian spouse. According to their interpretation, these Asian Americans are trying to compensate their spouse with extra
education in order to gain a higher racial status. Does the theory of racial exchange have its merits? Is there a consensus about racial hierarchy in certain societies? Klain and Berry (1996) conducted a nation wide study in Canada to investigate the degree of ethnocentrism and the common consensus of racial hierarchy among all ethnic groups. The findings revealed a vertical preference order to ethnic groups, with the British at the top and the Sikh at the bottom of the hierarchy. Surprisingly, many minority groups who are the victims of such a hierarchy also subscribe to the same racial hierarchy as the dominant group. It appears that racial hierarchy does exist in many people’s mind, even in a country where multiculturalism is highly emphasized.

Interviewees in studies often deny that race is a factor that promotes their choice of intermarriage. Many interviewees claim that their marital choices are based on romantic love, mutual attraction and common interests (Lewis, Yancey, & Bletzer, 1997; Mcquire, 1993). Fu and Heaton (2000) conducted an interracial marriage study that included four major races in Hawaii. They found that socio-economic status rather than race was the major determinant that affected their marital choice. In their study, Japanese who have the strongest economic power ranked at the top of the hierarchy, followed by Caucasian, Filipinos and Hawaiian. Their findings contradicted the theory that race is the major element in marital exchange. The evidence of racial status exchanges in interracial marriage seem to be inconsistent.

Other than the racial hierarchy factor, racial stereotypes also are related to the exchange of rewards in intermarriage. Monroy (2001) mentioned that the basic purpose of stereotypes is to provide us with an easy way of categorizing people superficially rather than examining them as individuals. Societies also have used stereotypes to maintain the status
Fu and Heaton (2000) maintain that members of one ethnic group develop ideas, biases and stereotypes about other ethnic groups and they often rely on these ideas to judge and guide their intergroup interactions. Intermarriage can possibly be the product of certain stereotypes or imaginations between individuals from different ethnic groups. Piper (1997) suggests that racial stereotypes need to be taken into account in understanding intermarriage that occurs in societies with a strong racial hierarchy. Among various racial stereotypes, gender role stereotypes have their influences on the mate selection in intermarriage. Cerroni-Long (1985) points out that individuals may not be able to find an ideal partner that fits the stereotyped image within their own group and so they may search for them in outgroups. Romano (1997) suggests that many intermarried spouses expect their partners to be foreign reflections of their own perceptions of what a husband or wife should be. Fong and Yung (1996) found that racial and gender hierarchy and its concomitant stereotypes are important factors for the higher rate of Asian American women marrying Caucasian men.

Monroy (2000, 2001) illustrated two major stereotypes that are commonly portrayed in White men and Asian women unions – the GI Joe and the Geisha. The GI Joe refers to white men who seek out minority women to recover the ideals of femininity, wifely devotion and self-sacrifice that they can no longer find in women of their own race. The Geisha refers to Asian women who do everything in her power to please her man. This image is now commonly used in the business of Asian mail-order brides. According to Wagatsuma (1973), many American men held the stereotype of Japanese war brides as being passive, dependent upon men and home-oriented while these Japanese women often believed that American men were kind, helpful, generous and manly to their wives. These stereotypes seemed to have promoted post-war intermarriage between American men and Japanese women. To what
extent these racial and gender stereotypes still contributes to the occurrence of intermarriage in the modern world, very little is known. For example, modern young Japanese women who pursue interracial relationships are said to still hold the stereotypes that Western men are kind and respectful, compared to Japanese men (Kelsky, 1996b). Yet, Monroy (2000) argues that gender and racial stereotypes often are dismissed when facing scientific studies. She asserts that husbands of Asian women are found to be less domineering than their counterparts with Caucasian wives and that Asian women in intermarriage are no more submissive than women in same-race marriage. Chiu (1994) conducted a study on the division of household tasks among interracial couples and found that white husbands married to women with color actually did the same amount of housework as men in same-race marriages. These findings imply that women of color and white men couples are really not different from same-race couples in terms of gender power dynamics. One of Chiu’s interpretations of this result is that people who intermarry perhaps hold a more egalitarian attitude in terms of gender roles, and that intermarried individuals tend to be unconventional and that are less likely to conform to traditions. Apparently, in this case racial and gender stereotypes are unlikely to contribute to their choice of intermarriage.

One of the major problems of these studies in uncovering the psychological factors of individuals is that most of them use quantitative methods. The analyses and interpretations are mainly based on demographic and statistical data, which do not provide direct opinions from the participants. Such interpretations are subject to biases and are unable to capture the psychological complexity of these individuals. Whether racial hierarchy or gender stereotypes play a role in intermarriage still can not be fully identified. In order to understand the psychological components of these intermarried individuals regarding their
motives for choosing intermarriage, in-depth interviews appear to be more appropriate.

Personality Traits

The theory that personality traits lead to intermarriage asserts that individuals who choose intermarriage often hold different values, expectations and desires that are unusual in their own group. Intermarriage therefore results from an individual’s desire of fulfilling personal expectations or confirming personal image of self. These personal deviances include general feelings of inadequacy, alienation from and negative feelings toward one’s own group; guilt toward subordinate groups; rebellion to the norms of one’s own group in general or to the authority, parents or peers; aggressive feelings toward specific outgroups or revengeful feelings toward members of the dominant group (Black, 1973; Cerroni-Long, 1985; Murstein, 1973). Cottrell (1990) depicts intermarried people are psychologically, culturally or socially marginal. She summarizes that some intermarried persons are either rebellious or detached, suggesting alienation from or rejection of their own cultural of origin. Some of them are adventurous and emancipated, suggesting that they have moved beyond the cultural of origin without rejecting it. There are also embracers and multiculturalists who are either drawn to the positive features of another culture or are socialized in a multicultural environment and therefore perceive intermarriage as the norm.

Romano (1997) categorizes intermarried individuals into five groups:

“Nontraditionals” are individuals who do not put much importance on belonging to their own group although they are accepted by their own society. They often do things by themselves or are loners by choice. They are detached from their own culture and they either never share their mainstream culture or grow apart from it. “Romantics” believe that the additional difference from their spouse will make the challenge and adventure of the relationship more
exciting. Intermarriage allows them to cross the boundaries of race, class, religion and age. Some marry foreigners as a logical continuation of their wanderlust. "Compensaters" are people who feel incomplete in some ways and are looking for someone to counterbalance their personalities or make up what they are missing. For some reasons, these intercultural compensators believe that only a foreigner can make them complete. "Rebels" refer to free-minded individuals. Consciously or unconsciously, their intermarriage serves as a form of protest against values or beliefs in their own culture that they dislike and want to get away from. By marrying a foreigner, they are claiming a lifelong commitment to their statements of protest. Intermarriage is often the result of non-conformity to the social norm. This type of intermarriage usually occurs because of an individual's conversion to another religion or loss of faith in their own religion. In her study of interracial marriage both in Northern Ireland and Pakistan, Donnan (1990) observed that religious differences have caused people the feeling of cultural strangeness toward their own unions and have motivated them into mixed marriage. "Internationals" or so-called "third culture kids" usually live outside of their country when they grow up. They are often children of diplomats, missionaries, military personnel, academics or international business executives. They never feel they belong completely to any one culture and they are strongly influenced by other cultures. Intermarriage is almost an extension of their integrated cultural identity.

In a pilot study, Khatib-Chahidi, Hill and Paton (1998) interviewed 19 women in intermarriage. This study used in-depth but unstructured interview techniques and the participants were required to complete the 16 PF personality test. The interviews revealed some common themes in these participants' marital choices. Some of them were marginal within their own community and some wished to complement certain aspects of their
personality that they lacked. Some were drawn to their husband because they were different, and others had positive experiences with people from different culture before the marriage. The personality test results suggested that these women were more imaginative and unconventional, more emotionally stable, more adventurous and uninhabited, more sensitive to others, more experimenting, more liberal and more free-thinking. However, this study had a non-random small sample and its participants were highly educated and ready to settle down. This study was not conducted at the time of their marriage but later in their life, which made it difficult to determine if their personality traits was the cause or result of their intermarriage.

Resilience Perspective

The majority of interracial marriage studies often focus on the negative aspects of it. Not only is intermarriage often perceived as a form of exchange, individuals in intermarriage are often portrayed as psychological unhealthy (Romano, 1997). For instance, Japanese women who married American GIs after World War II were described as passive aggressive, outwardly subservient to men but inwardly demanding and usurping of family power and authority. Those American GIs were depicted as alienated, dependent and inadequate, especially regarding masculinity. They were threatened by the independence and strength of American women and they sought out Japanese women who were perceived as submissive and unthreatening. Their needs were met through intermarriage (Cottrell, 1990; Spickard, 1987). It is also suggested that Japanese men who marry other non-Japanese Asian women are seen as ‘social-economic losers”, who wish to restore their masculinity through intermarriage (Piper, 1997). Another negative focus on intermarriage is the belief that such marriage is difficult to maintain and interracial couples will have a greater probability of
divorce than same-race couples (Chan & Wethington, 1998).

In recent years, a resiliency perspective has merged in intermarriage studies. This perspective pays more attention to positive resources brought by individuals in intermarriage rather than seeing intermarriage as a stressor that needs extra effort to maintain its stability. It also emphasizes individuals' competence and strength, and how they manage environmental and social challenges. In other words, instead of looking at what may cause the marriage to fail, the resilience approach focuses on the circumstances that produce success (Chan & Wethington, 1998). Instead of viewing intermarriage as an exchange for status, one major shift on intermarriage studies is the focus on couples who share similar educational background. Qian (1999) mentions that education usually weakens racial attachment and increases social contact. As a result, more and more highly educated individuals now have greater chances of marrying interracially. Breger and Hill (1998) point out that educational and professional similarity have been seen to be increasingly important in cross-cultural marriages that occurred towards the end of the twentieth century. Romano (1997) also agrees that there are more intermarriages between people who have reached a similar educational level. These people often meet in the context of educational opportunities and they connect with each other on an intellectual plane and often feel above many of the religious, racial, cultural and gender taboos of their parents or community. It appears that higher education not only provides individuals with the opportunity to meet their interracial spouses, but also helps them free their mind, breaking through racial or cultural barriers.

The resiliency view also emphasizes the positive interactions and outcomes of intermarriage. As early as the 1980s, Black (1973) suggested that intermarriage could be the
source of a richer life for both partners. For people who experience marginality, Khatib-
Chahidi et al. (1998) contend that intermarriage actually provides an avenue for them to
distance themselves from elements in their own culture or family that they disagree with or
dislike. Sometimes it allows them to express their marginality even further. Romano (1997)
concluded that intermarried couples have the opportunity to experience greater variation and
vitality in their life style and that they often develop an international identity and feel a sense
of being pioneers in a new world order. He believes that intermarriage gives individuals the
opportunity to increase self-knowledge because inevitably they are forced to examine and
define their own values, ideas and prejudices. The exposures to new, different and valid
ways of approaching life, as well as the challenges to resolve problems often bring self-
growth.

The shift from the traditional to a resilience approach provides a more positive and
optimistic view on intermarriage. Yet, intermarriage occurs in many different forms and for
many different reasons. The well-educated intermarried population is only a small portion of
all types of intermarriage and they do not represent the majority of intermarried people. For
instance, although war brides are no longer the mainstream of intermarriage, mail-order
brides from Russia, East Europe, and some South East Asian countries are trendy in the
Western society. It illustrates that intermarriage is multifaceted, and its causes and outcomes
are complicated. No one single explanation can be applied to all cases and no one single
approach can cover all circumstances.

Japanese Women and Intermarriage

Both assimilation theory and structural theory provide partial explanations for the
occurrence of intermarriage among Japanese women who live abroad for a long time before
they get married. In order to understand the prevalence of cross-national relationships and marriage among young Japanese women, their psychological factors need to be taken into account. The unique historical background of the interactions between Japan and the West also provides insights into this phenomenon.

The trend of intermarriage between Japanese women and Caucasian men started at the end of World War II when the American military took over Japan. The American occupancy of Japan created opportunities for those intermarriages to happen (Kelsky, 1996a; Wagatsuma, 1973). It is estimated that between 50,000 to 60,000 Japanese women married Americans and moved to the United States after the war (Wagatsuma, 1973). One of the reasons that Japanese women married American GIs was to escape from poverty during postwar Japan. Since the war took many Japanese men’s lives, the sex ratio in Japan became unbalanced. There were not enough Japanese men around for Japanese women to marry. For some older women who were under social pressure to marry, marrying a foreigner was better than staying single (Spickard, 1987). Other than practical needs, some Japanese women who chose to marry American soldiers had different aspiration. Cottrell (1990) described these war brides as women who had broken the cultural norms that traditionally constrained females and they had become acquainted with a new and freer culture through contacts with Americans. For some Japanese women, the victorious and conquering occupiers represented a world of privilege and intermarriage provided access to that world (Kelsky, 1996a). It also issaid that the victory of Americans in World War II had threatened Japan’s ethnocentric ego and it had created an ambivalent “inferiority-superiority complex” toward Caucasians for many Japanese people (Wagatsuma, 1973). An idealized image of the West and Western men was created since then (Kelsky, 1996a; Wagatsuma, 1973), and many
Japanese war brides tended to idealize American men as kind, supportive and financially secure (Cottrell, 1990). During the postwar period, some Japanese women believed that they would acquire a different life experience and a higher status through intermarriage. They also wanted to be treated as Western ladies which Japanese men were unable to do (Spickard, 1987). To this day, Japanese women are said to still have such an idealized longing for the West, which contributes to the trend of Japanese women moving to the West or marrying Caucasian men (Kelsky, 1996a). In her study of interracial dating behaviours of Japanese women, Kelsky (1994, 1996a) mentioned that her participants often complained that Japanese men do not know how to treat women right, unlike foreign men who know how to treat women like ladies. Some of them expressed the view that dating a Western man made them feel “taller” when they walked down the street and it gave them a higher status among their peers.

It appears that the combination of racial and gender stereotypes, as well as the ideology of racial hierarchy can account for the occurrence of intermarriage between Japanese women and Western men to a certain extent, both in the past and present. Yet, it is important to note that most literature on war brides can no longer accurately portray the reality of today’s intermarriage. The social, cultural and political environments in which intermarried people live have changed dramatically in the past 40 years (Cottrell, 1990). As a result, individual motives for choosing intermarriage often have changed as well. It would be unfair to conclude that modern Japanese women in intermarriage still share the same mentality as that of war brides. In fact, one of the common reasons that motivate women into intermarriage is the issue of gender equality. It is observed in other Asian countries that women consciously seek out white partners because they find them more egalitarian than
men of their own race (Monoroy, 2001). Indeed, recent changes of the social structure of Japanese society, especially Japanese women's frustration with patriarchy, have motivated some women to pursue a more equal gender relationship overseas. Kelsky (1996a) suggests that for many Japanese women, the West holds their hopes for professional and personal emancipation, as well as the discovery of new selves. These goals are often to be reached through a Western lifestyle and romance with Western men. In Japan, the media constantly portray Japanese society as sexist and feudal, and portray the West as egalitarian and democratic. The West, especially the United States of America, is regarded as the most limitless space of all in which talents are recognized regardless of age, race or gender (Kelsky, 1996a). It may be true that the West and Western men have been idealized, but the actions of these Japanese women still express indirect critiques of Japanese men's behaviour, values and expectations (Kelsky, 1994; 1996b). The ideal image of foreign males becomes a symbol that reflects the deficiencies of Japanese men as lovers, husbands and friends (Kelsky, 1996b). As Wagatsuma (1973) states, by choosing a white man, Japanese women are challenging Japanese men's worth and virility. In the long run, the “internationalization” of Japanese women symbolizes negotiation between some Japanese women and men over present-day and future gender relations in Japan (Kelsky, 1996b).

**Gender Equality in Marriage**

In the process of making a marital choice, “role stage” involves a couple’s assessment of whether they will be functioning in compatible roles. The mutual fulfillment of role expectations often determines whether the couple will marry (Murstein, 1973). Traditionally, the distinction between gender role was more clear-cut in that women were assigned a feminine role as a homemaker, and men were assigned a masculine role as a provider (Lye &
This distinction is especially clear in a patriarchal society in which the wife is placed in a subordinate position (Knudson-Martin, 1997). In North America, the transformation in gender role started under the impact of the feminist movement in the 1960s and 1970s. Traditional gender roles have begun to move toward egalitarianism that emphasizes similarities in male and female roles rather than their differences (Cohen & Burdsal, 1978; Lye & Biblarz). This movement has affected the traditional marital relationship, and gender issues have become variables that influence marital quality.

Dilemma of Gender Equality

According to Knudson-Martin and Mahoney (1996), in an equal relationship, each spouse has roughly the same capacity to get the other to cooperate in order to attain his or her goals, and the flow of attention and concern goes toward each partner in order to attain mutual well-being. Yet, even in the most progressive societies, true gender equality is often more a goal than a reality (Romano, 1997; Shehan & Lee, 1990). Although beginning in the 1970s, research has revealed that women prefer a more egalitarian gender relationship (Shehan & Lee, 1990), American couples still find it difficult to construct an equal relationship (Knudson-Martin & Mahoney, 1996).

There is general agreement in the literature that women often face more challenges and difficulties in the bargaining for equal relationships. Krausz (1986) asserts that the lack of social and family support, as well as the lack of role models within the larger society cause dilemmas in women's role attitudes. Despite the desire for an equal relationship, women are often not prepared to risk the conflicts and anxieties brought on by these issues. They often choose to stay in a traditional role to maintain the status quo. Larson, Hammond, and Harper (1998) suggest that women generally are more concerned with the quality of interpersonal
relationships, they tend to monitor their relationship more closely and are more sensitive and responsive to the level of equality. Since women usually experience less power than men in marriage, they have to work harder to restore equality than their husbands do in an unequal relationship. According to Knudson-Martin & Mahoney (1996), we all have been socialized to a certain extent into the assumptions of patriarchy, and men and women seldom enter a relationship with equal amounts of power. Through early socialization, women often are taught to value connections with others and they therefore tend to make more effort to maintain their marital relationship, sometimes at the cost of leaving significant parts of themselves outside of the relationship. They are more likely to make more adjustments than men to make the relationship work, which often gives men greater power to define their relationship. Blaisure and Allen (1995) also agree that women are always placed in a position to be responsible for a family’s emotional intimacy, to adapt their sexual desires to their husband’s, to monitor the relationship and to resolve conflicts.

Yet, whether an equal relationship can be reached often heavily relies on the husband’s attitude. It is found that when a wife’s gender role expectations are more egalitarian than her husband, it often affects their marital quality adversely (Shehan & Lee, 1990).

Not only are women conditioned to maintain a traditional gender role, the power of early socialization actually reinforces traditional gender roles for both men and women, and it hinders the development of an egalitarian gender relationship (Knudson-Martin & Mahoney, 1996). Couples often enter a relationship with the ideal of egalitarianism, but unconsciously they are driven by traditional gender role expectations and continue to interact with each other unequally. Yet, many people choose to maintain the stability of the
relationship and leave the inequality unexamined in order not to threaten the status quo (Knudson-Martin, 1997). Knudson-Martin and Mahoney (1996) argue that it is important to bring gender issues into light if a real equal relationship is to be achieved. They point out that gender issues are the underlying factors that cause marital conflicts, but many couples avoid dealing with them directly. Knudson-Martin and Mahoney state,

Myth of equality appears to be very common. Labeling the relationship as equal is a common solution for maintaining a stable relationship and avoiding overt dissatisfaction or role conflict. It limits the couple’s motivation and ability to engage in negotiation that would enable them to start a transition toward equality. Couples with mutually acceptable inequality do not delude themselves that their relationship is equal. Rather, they define inequality as natural or legitimate (p.147).

**Ideology and Resource Theory**

Given the importance of gender role issues in marital relationships, theorists have attempted to conceptualize how gender role dynamics are determined in a relationship. Blood and Wolfe (1960) are identified as the first scholars to study marital power. They first proposed that ideology and resources are two major variables that affect gender role dynamics in a relationship, although their studies failed to support the ideology theory (Shehan & Lee, 1990). The Ideology theory contends that gender role divisions in a relationship are determined by the gender ideology held by the couple. This construct views men and women as different cultures, and their gender role practices are predetermined by their gender role ideology acquired through early socialization (Shehan & Lee, 1990). Knudson-Martin (1997) agrees that most decisions of gender role practices between couples are made without conscious negotiation, and it is likely to stem from internalized gender
conceptions. In order to understand the influence of gender role ideology, Blaisure and Allen (1995) conducted a study of house task divisions of couples who claimed themselves as feminists and who also fit the categories identified by the researchers as feminists. The findings revealed that even in feminist-oriented relationships, women still perform more housework than men. They concluded that it was difficult to translate the ideology of gender equality into actual practice, even among those who consciously tried to discard their traditional gender roles. It appears that traditional gender role ideology acquired in early life has a profound influence on individuals and is difficult to change.

Resource theory asserts that the distribution of relevant resources between a couple determines who is primarily responsible for domestic chore performance or decision-making (Shehan & Lee, 1990). Resources are defined as the property of a person that can be made available to others to satisfy their needs or to attain their goals. Resources often include skills, physical strength, time, money, sex and accesses to education and other social resources (Blood & Wolfe, 1960). According to the resource theory, the balance of power is on the side of the partner who contributes the greatest resources to the marriage. The one who possesses more resources can wield power over the dependent spouse (Shehan & Lee, 1990). One of the criticisms of the resource theory is that it overlooks the importance of power dynamics in a relationship, due to the theory’s rigid and universal definition of resources. Safilios-Rothschild (1976) contends that there is great variety in the degree of importance attached to different resources between the spouses. The more a spouse has no direct access to a resource she/he desires, the more she/he is willing to pay to attain it. Rodman (1972) also mentions that one spouse may be willing to forgo power in several other areas for power in an area of importance. Husbands and wives may have their own domains
of power.

To demonstrate the broad variety of resources, Safilios-Rothschild (1976) further defines seven categories of resources. These categories are socioeconomic (money, social mobility, prestige), affective (affection, love, feeling needed), expressive (understanding, emotional support, special attention), companionship (social, leisure, intellectual), sex, services (housekeeping services, childcare, personal services, linkage services – linkages to other social resources), and power in the relationship. Among all of them, socioeconomic and affective resources are the most highly valued and can be controlled by one spouse only. She points out that the traditional resource perspective often ignores the importance of love, sex and companionship as powerful resources that can determine the power dynamic in a relationship. Nevertheless, studies on marital power still largely focus on the socioeconomic resources. One major direction is on how a wife’s employment may affect equality in a marriage. Research findings in this area are found to be inconsistent in that the wives’ employment does not always predict a more equal gender relationship (Krausz, 1986). It appears that employed wives generally perform less housework and have more decision-making power than unemployed wives. Their employment often increases their husband’s involvement in household tasks. Yet, they still take the major responsibility for domestic chores (Barnett & Baruch, 1987; Blaisure & Allen, 1995; Chai, 1987; Hsia, 1996; Krauze; Rodman, 1972; Roxroat & Shehan, 1987).

Ideology and Resource Theory Studies

Toro-Morn (1998) studied how race and gender interact to condition the experiences of Puerto-Rican immigrant women in Chicago. Since there is a clear-cut gender role division in Puerto-Rican society, many Puerto-Rican immigrant men still hold on to the traditional
ideology that husbands should be the providers and refuse to let their wife seek employment. Although due to financial necessity, some men have broken the tradition and accommodated to their wives' temporary employment, they still do not change the traditional division of labor within the household. Instead, women have to develop strategies to adapt to their new role as working wives, juggling between housework, childcare and employment. It appears that Puerto-Rican immigrant women are able to attain a new gender role identity as a breadwinner when necessary, but at home they are still bound by the ideology of a traditional gender role.

In her study of Korean immigrant women in Hawaii, Chai (1987) focused on a group of middle class and educated women who married to professional and student husbands. Similar to Puerto-Rico, in Korea there is a clear gender role division in the household and it is uncommon for married women of relatively high socio-economic status to work. Most of the participants in this study had been urban full-time homemakers with high school or college education before they moved to Hawaii. For economic reasons, the women had to find employment outside of home. Chai found that although they had to find employment in order to support the family, their wage earnings led to a more flexible division of labor, decision-making and parental responsibility, as well as less sex separation in social life and public places. The economic power they gained brought them to doubt their spouse’s authority to dominate them and they started to insist on their husband sharing the house work although many husbands still refused to do so.

Man (1995) interviewed Hong Kong middle class immigrant women who moved to Canada in recent years and found that their power in the marriage deteriorated due to the decline of their employment status and the loss of social resources. In this study, most of
these Hong Kong immigrant women were employed middle-class professionals in their hometown. Although they were in charge of the home, their economic power allowed them to hire housemaids to help with housework. Many of them therefore had spare time to participate in social activities and enjoy entertainment. After moving to Canada, these professional middle-class immigrant women faced the obstacle of finding a satisfying job that matched their education and training. Some of them had to take a low-skilled job and some of them gave up working altogether. These changes directly affected their economic power as well as their gender role practices in marriage. Some women found themselves having to rely on their husbands economically for the first time in their life. Often they were forced to adopt a more traditional gender role, assuming all the responsibilities of housework and childcare. While struggling with their new gender role identity, many of these Hong Kong immigrants found it embarrassing to ask their husband to share household tasks because showed their inadequacy. Because most men from Hong Kong did not participate in housework, these Hong Kong immigrant women often ended up carrying all of domestic responsibilities alone.

Resources in Cultural Context

These studies show that neither ideology theory nor resources theory alone sufficient to explain the gender role dynamics in relationships. It appears that under different circumstances, either ideology or resources can become the dominant factor that affects gender dynamics in these immigrant families. Although these immigrant women have resided in North America, their gender role attitudes are still embedded in their culture of origin. Knudson-Martin and Mahoney (1996) state that how people define gender equality is influenced by the social context. Krausz (1986) mentions that it is generally accepted that
cultural variables have significant impact on the distribution of family responsibilities and
decision-making. Taking the influence of cultural context into consideration, Rodman
(1972) postulates the concept of "resources in cultural text". This approach reconciles
resource theory and the ideology theory (Shehan & Lee, 1990). Rodman asserts that the
balance of marital power is influenced by two variables: the comparative resources of the
husband and wife, as well as the cultural or subcultural expectations of marital power
distributions. These two variables often interact with each other to determine the power
dynamic in a relationship. For example, in some societies, the cultural context may forbid or
permit the use of certain resources in bargaining for marital power. Rodman examined
studies conducted in nine different countries and found that whether or not the husbands' status provided them more marital power was related to the cultural context. In either an
egalitarian or a patriarchal society, there is no correlation between husbands' status and marital power. In a so-called "modified patriarchal society", such as Greece and Yugoslavia,
where the norm is still patriarchal but modified by an infusion of egalitarianism, a negative
correlation between husbands' status and power is found. Only in a so-called "transitional
egalitarian society" where the norms are sufficiently flexible to permit a power struggle, are
the husbands' status and power positively correlated. Germany and the United States are examples of such societies. Rodman explains that in a patriarchal society, since men's authority is ascribed, low social status does not deprive their power. Similarly, men with low status in a modified patriarchal society are still able to maintain their marital power, but for men with higher education and status, they are likely to have a more egalitarian attitude.
Status and marital power therefore have a curvilinear relationship. In a transitional
egalitarian society, since couples constantly engage in power struggles to balance the marital
power, additional resources usually bring additional power. A husband’s status is often important in maintaining or increasing his power. In an egalitarian society, since the norm of egalitarianism is so well established, men and women share equal power regardless of the resources they possess. A husband’s status becomes irrelevant in determining his marital power.

Process Theory

Another major paradigm in discussing gender equality is the multiple domains of power identified by Cromwell and Olson (1975). They define power as consistency of three domains: bases, processes, and outcomes. “Power bases” consist of the resources individuals possess that may enhance their ability to exercise control. “Power processes” refer to the ongoing interactional strategies individuals use to maximize the impact of their resources. It involves stages of information exchange, persuasion, consideration of alternatives and negotiation before reaching a final resolution. “Power outcomes” is the identification of who makes the final decision or wins in negotiation (Shehan & Lee, 1990). Traditional resource theory mainly focuses on power bases and power outcomes but fails to take power processes into account.

Knudson-Martin and Mahoney (1996) incorporate ideology, resource theories, as well as the influences of social context, emphasizing the notion of negotiation processes. The process perspective they postulate views gender as a part of interpersonal processes. Not only is the determination of gender role identities and gender relationships an ongoing process, but it also is affected by the overall system in which the individuals are related (Knudson-Martin, 1997). Knudson-Martin and Mahoney suggest that although people often bring their gender identity into their relationship without being fully aware how these
identities shape their behaviours, these identities can still be altered or reinforced through the process of negotiation. They mention that the process of negotiation is often influenced by the power dynamic between a couple and it requires constant effort because the power dynamic is always ongoing in a relationship.

Blaisure and Allen (1995) maintain that actual equality requires conscious negotiation even among couples who hold strong egalitarian ideals. They define the ongoing attention to marital equality as a “process of vigilance”, which requires couples to monitor their relationship constantly and make necessary adjustments. They identify five processes of vigilance that are important in achieving gender equality. These processes include a critique of gender injustice, public acts of equality, husbands' support of wives' activities, reflective assessment and emotional involvement. Among them, the reflective assessment and emotional involvement have the most profound influences on the gender dynamic. The reflective assessment indicates the monitoring of one’s contributions to the relationship and family life, including parenting, household and domestic responsibilities. The emotional involvement refers to the efforts of meeting each others’ emotional needs, which involves consciously changing relationship style, communicating emotions and not withdrawing from conflicts.

One of the criticisms of the ideology perspective is that it views the gender identities of women and men as inflexible, which provides no opportunity for change (Knudson-Martin & Mahoney, 1996). Also, although gender role ideology may be acquired at a young age, it is not necessarily stable or universal (Smith & Schooler, 1978). The major pitfall of resource theory is that it only measures the division of labor or the power of decision-making, and completely ignores other important components in determining gender dynamics. Compared
to the ideology theory or the resource theory, process theory provides a more comprehensive and flexible explanation on the development of gender equality.

**Japanese Women and Gender Equality**

In his Culture's Consequence model, Hofstede (1996) distinguishes societies as "Masculine" versus "Feminine". The masculine society refers to a society where social gender roles are clearly distinct while the feminine society is a society that has a less clear-cut gender role separation. In his study of IBM employees across 45 countries, Japan is ranked as the number one masculine society. It indicates that Japan is still a strong patriarchal society with men holding a more powerful position and a higher social status in the society. Women are still experiencing discrimination and inequality both at home and at work. Male domination is rooted in transitions throughout Japanese history.

Historically, the role of Japanese women has undergone enormous changes over the past 1500 years. In prehistoric Japan, male and female gods interacted freely and equally. Even until between A.D. 500 – 700, half of the Japanese rulers were females (Nester, 1992). Yet, gradually Japanese women receded into the political background and Japanese women’s behaviours became strongly controlled during 800 years of feudalism. During this era, Japanese women were required to walk behind any male companion to display their inferiority in status. After the ending of the feudal war and at the beginning of Tokugawa government (1615 – 1857), Japan was under the strong influence of Buddhism and Confucianism which further reinforced the notion of patriarchal authority and upheld the inferior status of women (Hsia & Scanzoni, 1996; Nester, 1992; Schooler & Smith, 1978). During the Meiji Restoration (1868 - 1912), although Japanese people were liberated from feudalism (Hsia & Scanzoni, 1996), a strict patriarchal family system “ie” was established
under the Meiji Civil Code. The "ie" system assigned men as the head of the household and it legally defined women's inferior status at home (Hsia & Scanzoni, 1996; Nester, 1992; Refsing, 1998; Yoshizumi, 1995).

Gender Roles of Japanese Women

Since then, Japanese women were seen legally, politically and economically incompetent and they had no legal rights over their children and had no rights to enter into contracts or to own property. Husbands had the right to exercise legal control over their wives. In this type of marriage, the husband was given a tremendous degree of power and authority over other family members. There was a clear hierarchy in the marital relationship in which the wife was placed in a subordinate position and was required to be obedient to her husband. The relationship between husband and wife was never equal (Nester, 1992; Yoshizumi, 1995). In this type of traditional marriage, a husband and a wife had clear-cut gender roles to follow and the purpose of marriage was to maintain its instrumental functions. Marriage that emphasizes its production and reproduction functions is often referred to as "instrumental marriage", in contrast to "expressive marriage" that focuses on emotional involvement and intimacy (Kamo, 1993). The old-fashioned Japanese marriage was a typical example of an instrumental marriage. In terms of marital choices, priority was placed on the interests of the family, rather than the individuals' will (Imamura, 1990; Yoshizumi, 1995). Most marriages were arranged by parents or relatives. For women, marriage did not mean creating a family of her own but to enter into her husband's family. A woman was expected to fulfill the role of bride and daughter-in-law. She was expected to serve her parents-in-law and most of all, her major duty was to give birth to a male successor. Having a male successor was so important to the family that it was socially acceptable for a
man to keep mistresses as a way of ensuring a successor (Yoshizumi, 1995).

In arranged marriages, the family power structure is more patriarchal and there is a culturally given and reinforced division of labour between the husband and wife. The husband is expected to fulfill the role of a provider and the wife is to take care of the family members’ emotional and physical needs (Imamura, 1990; Schooler & Smith, 1978; Walsh & Taylor, 1982). Under such expectations, Japanese women primarily identify themselves with the concept of “good wives and wise mothers”, and they are encouraged to strive for the traditional female virtues, such as mildness, stoicism, and consideration of others (Refsing, 1998). Japanese men, on the other hand, place priority on their career as a “company man”. They typically leave their home early and come home late at night, and they spend very little time with their wives and children (Yoshizumi, 1995). These so-called “seven-eleven husbands” place their main responsibility on bringing money home but not on direct involvement in their family activities or child rearing (Ishiyama & Kitayama, 1994). Yet, they do not perceive themselves as being neglectful; instead they believe that they are fulfilling their responsibility to support their family (Yoshizumi, 1995). Commonly, couples in this type of marriage do not seek emotional connections with each other. Sometimes the marriage only exists in form (Hsia & Scanzoni, 1996; Schooler & Smith, 1978; Yoshizumi). The Japanese saying, “a good husband is one who is healthy and away from home” (Refsing, 1998) reflects the emotional independence of Japanese wives (Hsia & Scanzoni, 1996). As pointed out by Hofestede (1996), in the masculine society, health and wealth are more important in marital choices, unlike love and romantic feelings that are often emphasized in the feminine society. Thus, many Japanese couples do not choose divorce despite the emotional distance between the husband and wife. Some of them rather maintain a
superficial relationship in order to keep the family intact, and some of them do not perceive emotional intimacy as an important element in marriage (Hsia & Scanzoni, 1996; Yoshizumi, 1995). It explains why the divorce rate is still relatively low in Japan, compared to many Western countries (Yoshizumi, 1995).

Among all the expectations of married women, the role of mother is the most highly valued and honored role in Japanese society (Hsia & Scanzoni, 1996; Imamura, 1990; Smith & Schooler, 1978; Suzuki, 1991; Takahashi, 1994). The constant absence of the husband has reinforced the importance of mother’s role in Japanese families. In such a fatherless family system, the mother becomes the creator and gatekeeper of the family interaction pattern and role structure (Ishiyama & Kitayama, 1994). Indeed, many Japanese wives therefore have gained great freedom in the domestic sphere and their husbands usually do not interfere with it (Imamura, 1990). The identity of mother’s role is so deeply rooted in many Japanese women’s minds that it is said to be the strongest obstacle to the feminist movement in Japan (Takahashi, 1994). The emphasis on the maternity role has created more inequality in the work place for women and has jeopardized many women’s career. Since the role of mother is defined as the major responsibility and the purpose of a woman’s existence, Japanese women are expected to quit their job after they are married. It is assumed that a woman will work only to find a husband and her commitment will be her home after she is married, Japanese companies commonly do not want to invest time and resources training women at work or providing them important jobs (Nester, 1992; Refsing, 1998). Japanese society generally does not provide enough support to encourage women to stay at work. There are no adequate child care facilities and most men do not share the responsibility of child-care or house chores. This makes it almost impossible for women to continue working after having
children (Yoshizumi, 1995). Working mothers also are often blamed for fostering delinquent children and failing to maintain a happy marriage, which puts more pressure on women to give up their career (Refsing, 1998). Willingly or not, many women do quit their jobs after they are married. It justifies the discrimination against women at the work place. Japanese women therefore get caught in a vicious employment circle in which the justification for discrimination against them becomes a self-filling prophecy, which is in turn used to justify continued discrimination (Nester, 1992).

Trend of Gender Equality

The major changes in Japanese women's roles happened after World War II. During the American Occupation (1945-1952), American authorities imposed a constitution on Japan which guaranteed women full political, economic and social rights with men (Nester, 1992; Refsing, 1998; Suzuki, 1991). The Civil Law enacted in 1947 was based on respect for individual dignity and equality of both sexes in the family. The old family system was abolished and the conjugal relationship became the corner stone of the family (Yoshizumi, 1995). Other than these changes in the government system, Japan also has undergone the impact of feminism, which has challenged the traditional gender role ideology. Studies have indicated that Japanese women's attitudes have moved toward egalitarianism (Buck, Newton, & Muramatsu, 1984; Kelsky, 1996a; Suzuki, 1991; Taylor, 1993). Women's desire for equality has been reflected in a decreasing birth rate, rising age of marriage, and an increasing number of single women (Kelsky, 1996a; Taylor, 1993). Official surveys in Japan show that support for the traditional gender role division of labor has continued to decrease (Taylor, 1993). Women repudiate the traditional ideology of sex roles that limit their sphere of activity to the home. They question the values of their traditional gender roles and wish to
continue developing their career after marriage (Yoshizumi, 1995). Many women’s expectations and ideal of marriage have become higher, but they also are frustrated with the difficulties of finding a partner who will understand and respect their work and share both housework and childcare responsibilities (Nester, 1992). It seems that many Japanese men are still unable to keep pace with the changes in women’s attitudes and behaviour. Modern Japanese women complain that they want to marry but there are no suitable men around. As a result, more and more Japanese women choose to stay single. They do not want to conform to the traditional gender role of full-time housewife, and they feel it is impossible to have an equal marital relationship with men in a society where sex discrimination is still predominant (Taylor, 1993; Yoshizumi, 1995).

Other than the demands of gender equality in marriage, under the influence of the Western culture, modern Japanese women also desire emotional intimacy in marriage. In recent years, the dominant view of marriage has undergone a change. Romantic love has become a main factor in marital choices and the emotional needs of individuals are highly emphasized. More and more women place greater importance on individuals’ self-fulfillment and they are no longer satisfied with the instrumental type of marriage. They are seeking a deeper relationship in which they can create emotional bonds with their husband (Yoshizumi, 1995). This type of marriage is called “love-matched” marriage, in contrast to “arranged” marriage. In “love-matched” marriage, couples have a more egalitarian power structure and there is a greater mutuality between husband and wife in terms of emotional interactions (Walsh & Taylor, 1982). This trend does not only strike women of younger generations but also has awoken the inner desire of older women. Increasingly, middle age and elder wives are initiating divorce in order to escape their husband’s control and to seek
freedom. This phenomenon often happens to women who have already raised their children and have completed their duty as a mother. They no longer feel obligated to stay in an unhappy marriage and it is time for them to move on and start a new life (Yoshizumi, 1995).

**Obstacles of Gender Equality**

As it is in any kind of transition, changes in gender roles in Japanese society face certain obstacles and challenges. Takahashi (1992) maintains that Japanese women are caught in a dilemma between the traditional value system and the desire for independence and actualization. Suzuki (1991) points out that during this transitional stage, Japanese women's sex role attitudes appear to be very inconsistent. Some of them retain the traditional belief in sex segregation and some believe in egalitarianism. Compared to American women, Japanese women's sex role attitudes are found to be more extreme in that they are either super-traditional or super-egalitarian. The characteristics of sex role attitudes of modern Japanese women are similar to those of American women in the early 1970s. This indicates that the changes in sex role attitudes of Japanese women are still in process and that Japanese women have not yet found a role model for their sex roles. Suzuki (1991) states,

> While contemporary Japanese women enjoy a variety of role alternatives and lifestyles, ambivalent sex role attitudes of traditionalism and egalitarianism characterize them. The sex role chaos will last until new appropriate roles for them are established. Until then Japanese society remains “a mosaic of sex role attitudes” (p.257).

The inconsistency of sex role attitudes is largely the result of the persistence of traditional gender role ideology. Yoshizumi (1995) mentions that while some women long for the opportunities to actualize their talents, most women are still content to be housewives.
and mothers. Research conducted in both the 1980s and 1990s reveal that many Japanese women still do not expect their husbands to share domestic work equally (Hsia & Scanzoni, 1996; Morinaga, Sakata, & Koshi, 1992), and household task division of labour is not necessarily an important predictor of marital satisfaction (Morinaga et al., 1992). It appears that many Japanese women still accept their assigned role as the primary homemaker.

The profound influence of traditional gender role ideology can be traced back to early socialization in childhood. Until this day, Japanese boys, especially the eldest, are still treated with special regard and privilege. Girls are carefully taught how to speak, how to sit and how to behave in a feminine way. Teenage girls still receive bridal training, such as flower arranging, tea ceremony and traditional music to ensure that they maintain their grace as traditional women. In the education system, it may appear that both boys and girls have equal opportunity for higher education, but most girls are encourage to go to junior colleges while boys go to university (Nester, 1992). In terms of marriage, many Japanese women are still under pressure to marry before the age of 25 (Taylor, 1993). Women over 25 are considered over the hill and lucky to get what they can in the marriage market (Nester, 1992). In marital relationships, although more and more Japanese people challenge their traditional gender roles, many of them still automatically place the priority on a couple’s role as parents. Many of them are not even conscious of the discrepancy between their ideal of marriage and their actual practice (Yoshizumi, 1995). Besides, although many men and women now choose their spouse based on romantic love and companionship, it is estimated that 40% of marriages are still arranged. Individuals are expected to make a marital decision after three or four meetings. In such cases, many women still place a man’s financial stability as the dominant factor in their mate selection (Nester, 1992).
Overall, despite feminists' efforts in asserting gender equality concepts based on Western feminism, the prevalence of traditional gender role ideology still hinders equal gender relationships in the Japanese society. As Yoshizumi (1995) comments, although the family system was legally abolished, the mentality of many Japanese women remains embedded in that system. There is still numerous psychological, cultural, and legal residue of the prewar family system that stands in way to the realization of egalitarian relationships.

**Gender Equality in Intermarriage**

Compared to same-race marriage, the issue of gender equality in intermarriage is complicated by the fact that intermarried couples are from different cultural backgrounds. On one hand, they often have to deal with two different sets of gender role ideologies. For foreign spouses, they also face the challenge of adopting a new gender role identity to fit into the social context of their spouse’s country. On the other hand, two individuals in intermarriage often are predisposed to unequal resources, which can hinder the gender equality in their relationship.

**The Differences in Ideology**

Refsing (1998) points out that within a specific culture men and women are often assigned complementary gender roles so people who have grown up in the same culture have a common model of gender role for them to understand or to follow. However, in cross-cultural marriage, such understanding or consensus is often missing and partners from two different cultures may have completely different perceptions and expectations of their gender roles. When this happens, gender role may become an issue in the marriage (Romano, 1997). The consensus in gender role attitudes is so important that if both spouses view their respective gender roles in the same basic way, they often find that their other cultural
differences will fall into place without too many difficulties. In contrast, if one of the partners is forced to adhere to a role that is quite different from her/his own beliefs, the discrepancy between their gender role attitudes can cause the marriage to break down (Refsing, 1998; Romano, 1997).

The pressure to adopt a new gender role identity often happens to foreign spouses who move to their spouse's country. Imamura (1990) states that foreign wives commonly face the challenge of attaining new gender role identities in order to fit into the new environment. The new gender role identities are related to the social norms of the host culture. Some may be asked to behave like delicate creatures that require male protection while others may be asked to continue reproducing and devote themselves to the extended family. Piper (1997) reports that Filipino foreign wives in Japan suffer from the pressure of conforming to a more traditional gender role to meet the expectation of their husband and society. Refsing (1998) finds that Japanese foreign wives in Denmark have to adopt a non-traditional role identity in which they have to take certain financial responsibilities and have to work outside the home. For Japanese men who marry Danish women and live in Denmark, they often have to share responsibility for daily chores. Yet, once they return to Japan with their Danish wife, they quickly take on the male gender role assigned by Japanese society, and their wives are under pressure to adopt a more traditional gender role. During this process of adaptation, foreign wives may feel ambivalent or even a sense of betrayal about their role changes when the new roles contradict the roles they acquired in their own culture through early socialization. Refsing (1998) mentions that individuals' identities are embedded in the collective identities within a specific socio-cultural environment. In intermarriage, when individuals move into a society with a different collective identity, their
personal identities no longer fit and therefore become threatened. They then may experience an identity crisis that involves a loss of the inner self.

With two sets of different ideology, intermarried couples may assume the other's gender role attitudes based on racial and gender stereotypes. Disappointment and frustration often rise when they find out that their partner does not fit the stereotype they imagined. Wagatsuma (1973) describes that many Japanese war brides ended up finding that their ideal "Western knight" was actually dependent and irresponsible; their husbands also were shocked when realizing their "Oriental doll" had turned into an aggressive and controlling "tough cookie".

The Imbalance of Resources

In terms of resources, foreign spouses in intermarriage often suffer from the deprivation of social resource after immigrating to their spouse's country. For women, who are predisposed to gender inequality, the deprivation of resources further increases the inequality in marriage. The adjustment process for immigrants is never easy and immigrant women's life seems to be particularly difficult. T. Noda, M. Noda, and Clark (1990) studied factors affecting Japanese immigrant women's adjustment in Canada and concluded that females encounter more difficulties than their male counterparts. Man (1995) stated that immigrant women's experiences are shaped by objective structures in the form of institutional and organizational process. She defines institutional process as those processes and practices that are embedded in government, law, education and professional system. Organizational processes are the concrete material changes that immigrants experience, such as the lack of support from family and friends.

Rockhill and Tomic (1994) contend that racism and heterosexism work together to
construct “immigrant women” as “others”, that is, not members of the Canadian society. They are not entitled to a fair share of the economic resources that are essential to their survival. They mention that except for refugees, women who immigrate to Canada as their husband’s dependent are denied access for most social assistance, including subsidized language and job training. For instance, married immigrant women are denied subsidized full-time study and are left only part-time courses offered through adult education. The English taught in those courses is only up to grade-six level, which does not equip immigrant women with the language proficiency necessary for desired employment, such as health care, office work and teaching because these types of jobs often are highly language dependent. For many highly educated and professional women, the major obstacle is that there is no adequate accreditation system to calibrate their qualifications. Being unable to obtain employment that is related to their qualifications and experiences, they are forced to take jobs at the bottom of the labor hierarchy (Chai, 1987; Man, 1995; Rockhill, & Tomic, 1994; Romano, 1997; Toro-Morn; 1998). Besides, the job market often requires “Canadian Experience”, which makes it almost impossible for new immigrants to find any employment (Man; Rockhill, & Tomic, 1994). Since participation in the labor force usually leads to increased, broader local contacts (Imamura, 1990), unemployment often isolates immigrant women and stripes their social competence. For instance, many Japanese women war brides were socially isolated because they rarely work outside the home (Cottrell, 1990). As a result, there was a marked degree of depression, sense of isolation, and profound feeling of inadequacy among these Japanese war brides (Wagatsuma, 1973).

Social competence and autonomy, as defined by Ishiyama (1989) include the social skills and abilities to communicate, obtain information, study the social norms, develop
relationships, assert self, problem solve, access resources and seek help from others.

Acquiring and practicing social skills are essential to social survival in the host culture. Ishiyama points out that being unable to completely demonstrate their knowledge and competence, immigrants often cannot assert themselves when needed and they often miss out on many self-validating opportunities. The level of social competence is often related to an individual's language proficiency. Ishiyama and Westwood (1992) mention that limited language and cultural competence often become obstacles for immigrants to achieve personal careers and to be validated in their new environment. Cultural disorientation and limited communication skills also hinder one's autonomy (Ishiyama, 1989). In interracial marriage, language often affects the balance of power in the relationship. Since language is power, the spouse with superior language proficiency has the advantage to direct the conversation and set its style, which provides him/her more power. Sometimes the power in language can be manipulated to serve personal ends (Romano, 1997). Kimura (1994) observes that language proficiency appears to be a crucial key for foreign wives to achieving upward mobility in occupations, expanding social network and obtaining greater life satisfaction. It also affects the process of acculturation and the depth of intimacy with their husband or other family members.

Although not all intermarried couples encounter problems discussed above, the differences in ideology and the imbalance of resources are not uncommon in intermarriage. Both partners therefore are required to make more adjustments and adaptations. The process of communication and negotiation therefore becomes crucial if an equal relationship is to be achieved.
Summary of Literature Review

Since the trend of Japanese women entering intermarriage is only a recent phenomenon in our society, there is not enough literature that elaborates about their experiences. What are the outcomes of their pursuit for gender equality? What are their perceptions of their gender equality? What have they done to acquire gender equality? What are the factors that influence the gender equality in their marriage? To answer these questions, there is a need to conduct an exploratory study to obtain first hand information.

The main focus of this study is to identify elements that contribute to gender equality. The dominant theories about the formation of gender equality in marriage include ideology theory, resources theory, and process theory. For intermarried people, these theories may not be sufficient to capture the complexity of gender equality in intermarriage. First, these factors may affect their gender equality in a different way than same race couples. In terms of ideology, intermarried couples often need to deal with differences in ideology due to their different cultural background. In terms of resources, many intermarried individuals suffer from a deprivation of resources. The process of negotiation may be hindered due to the individual’s lack of language proficiency. Second, these theories may not have identified factors that are unique to intermarriage. In intermarriage, individuals’ psychological motives of choosing intermarriage, their personal and cultural background, and the social context they live in may all affect their gender equality to a certain degree. Whether these existing theories can be applied to intermarriage still need to be tested through studies conducted with intermarried individuals.

For intermarried Japanese immigrant women, the above elements may intertwine with the historical residue of racial and gender attitudes, as well as the cultural adjustment process,
and contribute to the determination of gender equality in intermarriage. However, all of these potential factors identified here are only based on previous literature, lacking of empirical evidence. There may be some other factors that have never been identified. What factors are really important and how certain factors affect their gender equality still need to be explored.
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Design of the Study

The goal of this study was to explore intermarried Japanese women’s experiences related to gender equality issues in their marriage. The main focus was to identify common factors that had influenced their experiences. This study adopted a qualitative approach. A multiple case study method was applied.

As Strauss and Corbin (1990) point out, the assumption of qualitative studies is that the concepts pertaining to a phenomenon have not been fully identified, at least not in a particular population or place; or the relationships between the concepts are poorly understood or undeveloped. They also mention that there also is a need for more research when there are contradictions or ambiguities among previous studies, or when previous studies are unable to determine which variables may pertain to the phenomenon.

The review of literature in this study suggested the following: (a) Previous quantitative studies on gender equality issues often measured gender equality with one single measurement, such as housework division or decision-making power. This approach defined gender equality in such a specific but narrow way that it could not elicit other elements or areas that were also important to gender equality. A qualitative approach allows participants to express their own definitions of equality, which can provide a more comprehensive understanding of gender equality. (b) Quantitative research only focused on the outcome of the subjects’ behaviours and failed to explore the underlying motives that contributed to their behaviours. Since participant’s behaviours that contributed to gender equality in intermarriage were affected by many variables, a qualitative approach allowed this study to further explore these variables and make sense of the existing phenomenon.
A multiple case study design was selected for the following reasons: First, case studies are preferred when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context (Yin, 1984). The trend of young Japanese women entering intermarriage has been a rising phenomenon in our society in recent years, and very little was known about what happened to these women. A case study design was suitable to investigate such a new phenomenon. Secondly, in a multiple case study, each case consists of a whole study, with its own evidence, facts and conclusion (Yin, 1984). The multiple case study method allowed this study to highlight each individual's unique experiences through the single case analysis procedure. Finally, the main focus of this study was to identify common factors that affect gender equality in intermarriage. The cross-case analysis procedure in the multiple case study design would allow this study to reach this goal.

**Procedural Overview**

1. **Initial Contact with Participants**
   - Participant recruitment
   - Telephone interview for participant selection
   - Arrange the first interview

2. **Data Collection**
   - Orient the study to participant
   - Obtain informed consent
   - Obtain demographic information
   - Conduct initial interviews with semi-structured interview questions

3. **Single-Case Data Analysis and Verification**
   - Interview content transcribed by the researcher
   - Analyze the data using constant comparison method across five cases
   - Following up telephone interviews with some participants
   - Analysis reviewed by an independent judge
   - Send a copy of analysis to the participant
   - Conducting another interview for verification
   - Make adjustment on the single-case analysis
4. Cross-case Data Analysis and Verification

Further cross-case comparison after completing all single-case analyses
Analysis reviewed by the same independent judge
Discuss with the independent judge
Make adjustment on the cross-case analysis

Participants

Five participants were recruited through the following avenues:

a) A recruitment notice (Appendix A) posted in some Japanese bookstores, videotape stores, grocery stores, and at the head office of Japanese Canadian Citizenship Association (JCCA), and some community centres.

b) An advertisement (Appendix B) placed in the Japanese community newspaper Shing Pao and a website in Japanese language.

c) Word of mouth.

The original recruitment criteria and the rationales included:

a) Japanese women who are or have been in a common-law relationship or marriage with a Caucasian man for at least one year. The requirement of at least a one-year involvement in a relationship meets the definition of a legal relationship in Canada. The inclusion of Japanese women who were previously in interracial relationships is to increase the heterogeneity of the subjects. Women who have already left their relationships are probably less satisfied, and they are likely to have different experiences and perceptions. By including these women, it helps to avoid the selection bias of recruiting those more satisfied subjects only.

b) Japanese women who grew up in Japan and moved to Canada after the age of 18. The requirement of participants raised in Japan until age18 assures participants who were socialized in Japanese society before reaching adulthood. The homogeneity in these participants’ background will allow this study to identify
the influences of cultural factors.

c) Japanese women who have been in Canada for at least five years but no more than ten years. The limit of maximum length of stay in Canada was to recruit a younger generation of intermarried Japanese women who moved to Canada in the 1990s, which would help this study investigate the recent phenomenon of young Japanese women entering interracial marriage. The range between five to ten years of stay was designed to ensure a similar level of acculturation and language competency among the participants.

Subjects who would be excluded from this study were:

a) Subjects who were unable to express themselves proficiently in English.

b) Subjects who had trouble understanding the consent form.

c) Subjects who were currently suffering from severe mental illnesses and are susceptible to emotional disturbance.

Despite the different avenues I took to recruit participants, only five participants responded. One of them responded to the advertisement on the Japanese website and the other four were recruited through word of mouth. Among them, one had been in Canada for less than three years, which did not meet the criterion (c). During the initial telephone contact, I was convinced that her story was unique and representative, which would broaden the spectrum of this study. With the approval of the committee, this participant was included in this study. All other participants met the selection criteria. More information about the participants would be presented in Chapter IV: Single case analysis.

Data Collection

The data collection method used was semi-structured interviews. For all participants, a two and half to three hour in-person interview was conducted and audio-taped for the initial
data collection. For one participant, a second interview followed that lasted for another two hours to complete the initial data collection. For three participants, a brief telephone interview followed during the data analysis process to clarify some questions. One participant was asked a few questions that had commonly emerged from the other four participants’ interviews. Some updated information about the participants was also gathered through the telephone interviews. All the in-person interviews took place at the participants’ residences, except one that was conducted at the Counselling Psychology department at UBC.

In the beginning of the interview, each participant was presented with the consent form (Appendix C). I read and explained the consent form, and clarified all the questions the participants asked before they signed it. A copy of the consent form was given to each participant. Once the participant had signed the consent, she was asked to provide some demographic information (Appendix D) regarding her background. This session was conducted without audio-taping in order to protect the participant’s confidentiality. Since a third person would be involved for the data verification, I advised the participant not to reveal her identity once the audio-taping started in order to further ensure her confidentiality.

A list of interview questions was used to guide the focus of the interview but participants were invited to elaborate their experiences and to add areas that were important to them. The following interview questions were:

1. What made you decide to leave Japan?
2. Tell me about your life after coming to Canada.
3. After coming to Canada, what resources have you gained and lost? For example, job, status, family support, friends, access to community services, language, freedom, or
life style.

4. After coming to Canada, what changes have you experienced in terms of your values?

5. How did you meet your husband?

6. Why did you choose an interracial marriage?

7. Some people say that Japanese women think that marrying a White man gives them a higher status. What would you say about that?

8. Could you describe your and your husband’s typical day?

9. Could you describe your and your husband’s typical weekend?

10. Tell me what you like and dislike about your husband.

11. Could you describe the ideal marriage you would like to have.

12. Please tell me usually how you and your husband make decisions.

13. What kind of problems do you and your husband fight about?

14. What would be the differences if you had married a Japanese man?

15. In your marriage, in what areas do you have more power and in what areas does your husband have more? Why?

16. What roles did your father and mother play in your family? How did you feel about their roles?

17. What are the factors you think that have affected the gender equality in your marriage?

18. How satisfied are you in this marriage?

19. What would you say to other Japanese women who want to marry a White man?

One major difference between case studies and other methods is the role of theory development (Yin, 1984). In case studies, developing a theoretical framework prior to data
collection is an essential step in the research design; such a theoretical framework provides directions for data collection and data analysis (Yin, 1984). In this study, theories in determining gender equality in marriage were identified and summarized through the literature review. Because the data collection and analysis were guided by this theoretical framework, these interview questions were derived mainly from theories discussed in the literature review and they are designed to generate the following data:

a) To describe the participants’ experiences and to identify areas of equality and inequality.
b) To explore the sociological context and the psychological motives of participants’ decisions of intermarriage, as well as their relevance to gender equality.
c) To identify if participants’ ideology affects their gender equality.
d) To identify if the distribution of resources in marriage affects participants’ gender equality.
e) To understand the processes participants go through in acquiring gender equality.
f) To explore other gender equality factors which are unique to interracial marriage.

During the data collection process, I began with rapport building in gaining the participants’ trust. My background as an immigrant woman in an interracial marriage, and my role as a new mother helped me establish connection with the participants, especially when four of my participants all had a child about the same age as mine. Since I shared many similar experiences with my participants, it became easy for me to understand their feelings and to respond with empathy. My self-disclosure also came naturally during the interview due to the commonality between the participants and me. I believed that my empathic listening skills and certain degree of self-disclosure helped the participants to open up and helped elicit the data.
Since both the participant and I were speaking a second language in the interview, I made efforts to constantly clarify my questions and to explain them to the participants until they could fully understand them; I also constantly verified the participants' words to ensure the accuracy of the data. The interview questions were also designed to achieve reliabilities to a certain degree. When I found the participants' response to be inconsistent with their pervious statements, I would probe them in a gentle and non-offensive manner to clarify the inconsistency. I took notes during the interview and during the entire transcribing process to record my impressions and insights. The interview data were transcribed as accurately as possible. Not only were all the stutters or silences transcribed, the participants' tones of voice and expressions were also noted.

Data Analysis

The audio-tapes from all the interviews were transcribed by myself. The transcripts, the notes taken from all of the interviews, along with the demographic information were used as the sources of data analysis. Each audio tape was listened to repeatedly during the transcribing process, and each transcripts were read twice initially. A “case report” (Patton, 2002) that combined and organized the original data was written for each case. Initially, I intended to use the case report as the basis of the data analysis as Patton (2002) suggested, but I soon found the case report insufficient because it could not present the context of certain information. Consequently, I set aside all the case reports and repeatedly went back to the transcripts for each step of my analysis.

The ultimate goal of data analysis in this study was to examine whether existing theories of gender equality could be applied to gender equality in interracial marriage. To achieve this goal, the main approach was to compare data against these theories through
cross-case comparison. I intended to examine: a) whether any particular theory was dominant in determining gender equality in intermarriage, b) what explanations each theory could provide on the issues of gender equality in intermarriage, and c) new insights that were not covered by existing theories.

My original plan was to extract major themes based on each participant's experiences through the single case analysis. Among all these themes, I wished to find common themes that could be identified as "factors" that contributed to gender equality to complete the cross-case analysis. The strategy of identifying these common factors was to follow the theories discussed in the literature. According to Yin (1984), this strategy helps to focus attention on certain data and to ignore other data, but it also helps to define alternative explanations to be examined. However, once I began the data analysis and extracted important themes, the complexity of this study started to emerge. Throughout the entire data analysis, I experienced confusions and attempted many different ways to approach the data. Many insights were generated during this process and there was more clarity after each attempt and struggle. I began to gain a more comprehensive view on the issues involved in this study after all the pieces were put together.

In the very beginning, I started to extract themes in each case, and I began to label the participants' experiences based on my own perception of their level of gender equality in the marriage. As the process continued, I found myself becoming confused and lost because I realized that participants' perception of equality could be totally different given the very same experiences. The data also showed me that participants had different expectations of gender role equality. Some areas that were important to certain participants were not necessarily important to other participants. I was confronted with the most important
question – “What is gender equality?” Besides, whose view should count when there were different perceptions of gender equality between the participants and me? Should I come up with an operational definition of gender equality and measure equality with that definition? If so, what was the point of doing a qualitative study when participants’ own definitions of equality were no longer valued? I realized that while designing this research, I had not given these issues enough thought and I had assumed my definitions and perceptions of equality as the “standards” of gender equality.

Not only was my own bias on the definition of gender equality confronted, I also found it difficult to do a thematic analysis given the broad range of issues this study covered. It was a big challenge for me to come up with appropriate themes that would clearly characterize and distinguish the reality of the participants’ experiences, their perceptions of their experiences, the variation of their experiences, as well as the underlying factors that had affected their experiences. I began to question the suitability of the thematic analysis method for this study.

I then switched the focus of my analysis and began to approach the data from different angles. At first, I attempted to identify how the participants’ experiences affected their perception of equality. Then, I tried to focus on the participants’ experiences only without considering the underlying factors. These approaches were also abandoned for the same reason – they were not what I had intended to study, and the direction of data collection in this study did not serve the research purpose.

Eventually, I decided to change the analysis method: I gave up the thematic analysis method and only focused on identifying factors that had contributed to the participants’ experiences related to gender equality. I also decided to present the participants’ experiences
based on what happened to them without judging or labeling their experiences as equal or unequal. The participants’ perception of gender equality was presented in their story, rather than in the analysis.

One of the major decisions I had to make using this approach was to determine what experiences should be considered relevant to gender equality. The other challenge was to define the differences between factors and experiences. At times, there were no clear divisions between “experiences” and “factors” because many elements were interrelated and affected one another. My approach was to use my literature review as the guideline to differentiate these two. Basically, “experiences” were defined as direct and overt events, actions and emotions that happened to the participants. An area of experience was either a direct element of gender equality or was tightly associated with a certain element of gender equality. For instance, I defined both “financial autonomy” and “financial ownership” as experiences related to gender equality. Between them, “financial autonomy” represented one area of gender equality; “financial ownership” was an area that was associated with “financial autonomy” and had a certain impact on gender equality. “Factors” were defined as underlying and indirect elements that caused those overt events, actions and emotions to manifest. For example, “financial resources and contributions” was a factor that affected participants’ experiences in the area of financial autonomy or financial decision-making power.

In order to identify the experiences and factors in each case, a constant comparison (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) method was used to compare the participants’ experiences. Each experience and factor extracted in each case were compared against other cases. Many adjustments were made back and forth among all five cases in order to reach consistency in
defining each experience and factor. During this process, the single-case analysis and cross-case analysis naturally happened simultaneously. The domains of experiences and the categories of factors emerged during this process.

Eventually, many areas of experiences, such as gender role practice, gender role identity, decision-making power, financial autonomy, cultural adjustment and linguistic power began to emerge. These areas of experiences were grouped into three domains as gender role, finances and decision-making, and culture and language. Factors, such as influences from early socialization, financial resources and contributions, personality, and husband's cultural attitudes were identified. These factors were grouped into five categories as gender role beliefs, financial and cultural resources, socio-cultural factors, personal-psychological factors, and husband's attitudes. Among these five categories, cultural resources were grouped together with financial resources because they represented different types of resources the participants' possessed; social-cultural factors focused on factors that were related to external influences from the Canadian or North American society; personal-psychological factors involved participants' internal personal and psychological issues. For instance, the factor, "acculturation", was grouped into the "socio-cultural factors" category while the factor, "cultural identity", was grouped into the "personal-psychological factors" category because the former focused on the impact from the social and cultural environment of the host culture but the latter focused the participants' inner psychological process.

Since the husbands were not involved in this study, any description and analysis of them were all based on the participants' statements, and often their perceptions too.

Another challenge was to make connections between the factors and the experiences. Some of these connections were subtle and indirect while some of them were overlapped,
intertwined and multilayered. It was not always easy to pinpoint specifically which factor
had contributed to certain experiences. My approach was to treat the participants’ insights as
the main source of my interpretations in making such connections. Where the participants
did not make such connections, my interpretations were based on the combinations of the
participants’ statements, the context of their statements, my observations during the interview
and my own hunches and insights. As Manson (1996) mentioned, the interpretive reading
allowed the researcher to address the interviewees’ interpretations of their experiences, but
also to construct his/her own meaning of the data. When possible, quotes from the
transcripts were used to support my interpretations. I also tried to make it explicit when my
interpretations were different from the participants’.

The connection between each factor and each area of experiences was made under the
assumption of the proposed theoretical framework of this study. All causal inferences made
by the researcher should be regarded as tentative. Words such as “affect”, “influence”
“contribute”, and “impact” were used in conjunction with “seem” or “appear” to tentatively
infer a possible causal relationship between a factor and an experience. Expressions such as
“in my opinion” and “it seemed to me” indicate that my interpretations in these areas are
even more tentative than other areas. When participants made causal statements, a
qualifying phrase such as “she attributed”, “she identified”, or “she recognized” was used to
clarify the source of a causal explanation.

As the analysis process entered the final stage, I began to recognize another domain
of importance – personal power, especially a person’s sense of inner power. Such power was
not as obvious as decision-making power or linguistic power, but I found that it did exist and
was an important form of power for the participants. My recognition of this personal power
domain appeared to have made the picture of each participant’s experiences more complete. However, when I designed this study, the concept of personal power was not one of my assumptions, and therefore the data collection was not geared to generate information related to this topic. Besides, I also found that personal power was often subtle and difficult to recognize, and even the participants might not be aware of the existence of such power themselves. Although I have added “a sense of personal power” as an area of experiences under the domain of personal power, my interpretations in this area was more tentative than other areas. The domain of personal power would still need to be further refined with additional data in future studies. This issue would be further discussed in the section of implications for future research in Chapter VI: Discussion.

In cross-case analysis, how each factor affected each participant’s experience was organized and listed. The major comparison was based on the impact of those five categories. Areas of inconsistency across five cases were further examined and modified.

**Verification**

Case studies rely on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulation fashion (Yin, 1984). The single-case analysis was triangulated by the participant, an independent judge, and the researcher. After the initial interviews with the participant, I began the data analysis process, and a telephone interview was conducted in three cases for further data collection and verification during this process. After completing each single case analysis, my interpretation was reviewed by an independent judge who was also required to uphold confidentiality (Appendix E).

Based on the independent judge’s feedback, we discussed the differences in our analysis until we both reached agreement. Certain changes were made then. A copy of the
analysis was sent to the participant to check the accuracy of my interpretation of her experiences. The participant and I communicated through e-mail or telephone to discuss my interpretation until we reached consensus. More modifications were made until both of us reached consensus. These procedures were repeated for each case. The cross-case analysis was reviewed by the independent judge and modifications were made until we both reached agreement. One of the single case analyses was not verified by the participant, Sayuri. After the initial interview, I tried to contact this participant and left a telephone message but yielded no response. Upon the completion of my single case analysis, I made a few more attempts to reach this participant in order to send her a copy of my analysis. At this time, her telephone was no longer in use.
CHAPTER IV: SINGLE-CASE ANALYSIS

In this chapter, all five cases are presented and analyzed individually. Each case includes four sections: (a) description of the couple, (b) the story, (c) analysis, and (d) summary. “Description of the couple” gives a brief introduction of participants and their husbands. “The story” is the “thick description” (Patton, 2002) that portrayed participants’ experiences in their marriage.

“Analysis” identifies factors that contributed to participants’ experiences related to the issue of gender equality. This procedure includes two major steps. The first step is to identify participants’ experiences in specific areas that are relevant to gender equality. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the single-case analysis and cross-case analysis actually happen simultaneously and there were constant comparisons during this process. Based on the result of the comparisons, participants’ experiences are organized into four domains: gender role, finances and decision-making, culture and language, and personal power.

The second step involves the identification of specific factors that affect participants’ experiences in each area. Again, the constant comparison approach adopted in this process has led to the classification of these factors and they were organized into five different categories: (a) gender role beliefs, (b) financial and cultural resources, (c) socio-cultural factors, (d) personal-psychological factors, and (e) husband’s attitudes. In this section, how different factors under each category affect participants’ experiences in each area is discussed in details. Since some factors affected participants’ experiences across different domains, the analysis in this section focused on how each factor affected the participants’ experiences in each specific area, rather than in each domain. When possible, direct quotes are used to support my interpretations. I have intentionally kept the quotes original without much
editing, as long as they are understandable. The purpose of doing so is to reflect each participant’s actual language proficiency, which allows readers to gain a better sense of how much the language barriers can really impact each participant.

“Summary” provides an integrated view of how the combination of different factors work together to construct the participants’ experiences in each domain.

Each case contains two tables. The first table provides an overview of the participant’s four domains and different areas of experiences under each domain, which reflects the first step of analysis. This table only presents the “experiences”, without introducing the “contributing factors” that were related to the experiences. The second table reflects the second step of analysis and the “contributing factors” to each experience are added. It presents how each factor contributes to the participant’s specific experience in each area. Each specific area of experiences is presented in the third column, and its contributing factor is presented in the second column of the table. In other words, there is a relationship between the elements in column two and column three. The contributing factors are further grouped into five categories, which are presented in column one.

Since the husbands are not included in the interview, their attitudes are based on participant’s descriptions and perceptions.

**Definition of Terms**

The definition of terms is my working definition, and it includes two parts: Part A defines participants’ areas of experiences; part B defines the contributing factors.

**Part A: Definition of Areas of Experiences**

*Gender role expectations.* Participants’ expectations of their husbands related to their gender role practice or level of gender equality.
Gender role identity. Participants’ desire of what they wanted to be as a woman.

Gender role choice. Participants’ actual decisions on their current gender roles.

Gender role practice. Participants and their husbands’ performance on their gender role responsibilities, such as work, study, and household and childrearing tasks.

Gender role behaviours. Participants’ behaviours in interacting with their husbands.

Financial ownership. Participants’ sense of ownership over financial resources between their husbands and them.

Financial autonomy. Participants’ access to their or their husbands’ money and the freedom to spend it.

Financial decision-making power. Participants’ power in affecting the decision outcome related to financial matters.

Financial decision-making process. Participants’ involvements and attitudes during the decision-making process related to financial matters.

Decision-making power. Participants’ power in affecting the decision outcome in areas other than finances.

Decision-making process. Participants’ involvements and attitudes during the decision-making process in area other than finances.

Financial resource distribution. How the money between participants and their husbands are shared.

Cultural adjustment. Efforts participants or their husbands made to understand the other’s culture.

Linguistic adjustment. Efforts participants or their husbands made to understand and speak the other’s language.
Linguistic power. Participants or their husbands’ ability to master a language.

Sense of personal power. Participants’ sense of self-respect, freedom, pride, strength or power felt even without being aware of it.

Part B: Definition of Factors.

Influences from early socialization. Gender role beliefs that participants acquired or were exposed to in their early life, mainly from the influences of the family and Japanese society.

New gender role awareness. Gender role beliefs that participants acquired and developed later on, through either a gradual process or certain critical events. The new awareness could be significantly different from participants’ old gender role beliefs or it could be the enhancement of such beliefs. The term “awareness” was used to emphasize the conscious thinking process and choices involved in the development of the new beliefs.

Employment. Participants’ working status. It includes either paid or non-paid jobs, such as volunteer work and student status.

Financial resources and contributions. Financial resources include any financial sources participants possess, such as income or savings. Financial contributions are the money participants’ put into the marriage. Although financial resources and contributions are often related to employment, they are discussed separately to highlight their specific impact on the participants’ experiences.

Social competence. Participants’ skills and abilities to access and utilize social resources in order to achieve a desirable cultural understanding and integration to increase their level of functioning. Even though the factor of language resources is a major element of social competence, it is discussed separately due to its specific influences on participants’
experiences.

**Cultural advantage.** Participants or their husbands’ cultural knowledge or particular strength ascribed from their cultural background.

**Language resources.** Participants and their husbands’ ability to speak the languages that are used in the marriage.

**Cultural attitudes.** Participants’ attitudes toward their husbands’ culture, such as the level of ethnocentricity, cultural respect, cultural sensitivities, and cultural interests.

**Social context.** The social environment and conditions provided by a specific society.

**Acculturation.** The changes participants experience due to the influences of the host culture.

**Self-identity.** Participants’ understandings of who they are and what they want.

**Cultural identity.** Participants’ attitudes toward their own culture and the host culture.

**Personality.** Distinct personality traits participants display or identify that affect their experiences related to the issue of gender equality.

**Self-esteem.** Participants’ sense of self-worth, self-respect and confidence.

**Attribution and interpretation.** How participants perceive and interpret their experiences.

**Financial concerns.** Money as the reason that affect participants’ actions.

**Husband’s gender role attitudes.** Husbands’ attitudes toward the gender role practice in the marriage.

**Husband’s financial attitudes.** Husbands’ attitudes toward financial matters and financial decisions.

**Husband’s cultural attitudes.** Husbands’ attitudes toward the participants’ or their
own culture, such as the level of ethnocentricity, cultural respect, cultural sensitivities, and cultural interests.

**Husband’s conflict resolution attitudes.** Husbands’ attitudes during the course of conflicts and his reactions in resolving problems in the marriage

**Husband’s emotional connections.** Husbands’ emotional involvements and supports, as well as their understandings of the participants.
Akiko’s Case

Description of the Couple

Akiko was a 34-year old Japanese woman who had been married for two years. Akiko had resided in Canada for eight years and had obtained her landed immigrant status before she met her husband. At the time of the interview, Akiko was a full-time housewife and a mother to her eight-month-old daughter. Akiko had received her degree from a university in Japan and had worked in the immigration-related industry both in Japan and Canada prior to her marriage. Akiko’s husband Allen was born and raised in Canada. Allen graduated from college and was self-employed.

The Story

Since she was a young girl, Akiko wished to stay away from home as much as possible. Akiko did not feel close to her parents, especially her father. Akiko described her father as a typical old fashioned Asian man — bossy, abusive and controlling. A second generation immigrant in Japan, Akiko’s father did not have a single thread of Japanese blood in him. As a result, according to Akiko, he experienced much discrimination and had been deprived of educational and career opportunities. Filled with regrets, he wanted his children to achieve what he could not. He expected Akiko to excel, and to become a doctor or a lawyer. Akiko stated, “He was strict and he raised me to be different from other people.” Under pressure to live up to her father’s expectations, Akiko felt smothered. She wanted to leave home.

In Akiko’s eyes, her parents seemed a typical Japanese couple of their generation. Akiko described her father as the provider with all the power in the family. Her mother, a homemaker during the day who also worked at night, was submissive and patient. Akiko remembered that her father used to sit in front of the TV in the living room downstairs with
the remote control beside him, but still he would clap and yell for Akiko’s mother or the children to come downstairs and switch the channel for him. Akiko remembered that after each meal, her father would click his tongue; her mother would jump from her seat and go get him a toothpick. “My father was the King,” she said. Although she tried hard to please her husband, Akiko’s mother failed to prevent his beatings.

Despite what Akiko called his “male-dominating” behaviours, her father expected her to break from tradition and become an independent woman. He taught Akiko to be stronger than boys and not to depend on men. He even warned her not to get married. He stated, “The day you get married will be the day you are dying.” Looking back, Akiko thought her father sent her contradictory messages. On the one hand, he wanted her to be independent and told her to compete with boys outside of the house, but he still demanded that she behave like a typical girl. She said there were two different sets of rules for the boys and girls at home.

“Although my father has told me not to live like a typical woman, he also sometimes wanted me to do typical role things, such as housework, helping mother cooking, doing dishes that kind of stuff, which my brother didn’t have to do... In the house, I have to be a good daughter - not good child - good daughter, meaning have to be doing girl’s stuff.” Akiko found these contradictory messages confusing. However, as a child, she never questioned her father. “For most children, parents are everything so whatever your parents say, you have to follow them because that was the right thing to do.” Akiko described what she believed as a child.

After graduating from university, Akiko found a management job that required her to travel frequently around Japan and overseas. She found herself “farther and farther away
from home.” After a few years of traveling, Akiko felt burned out, but she did not know
what other job she could do. Akiko stated that she never really had any career ambition, but
at the same time, she “always wanted to feel I am doing something different than other girls.”
She could not picture herself settling for a clerical job and waiting to get married, like many
other Japanese young women. She continued to hear her father’s voice constantly telling her
to excel and be different. “I could live happily without any status or condition and that’s
what I have been always feeling since I was young. Money is not important, status is not
important, and the most important thing is peace of mind....but it’s contradictory. I was
always trying to be better than other people.”

Uncertain about her future and still trying to avoid her family, Akiko decided to take
a break from work. Since high school, Akiko had dreamed about studying abroad, learning
to speak English well, and living a cosmopolitan life style. Akiko’s company sent her to
Vancouver for three weeks and she fell in love with this city. After a three-week stay she
went back to Japan and worked for the same company for about another year, and then she
came back to Vancouver as an ESL student. Her original plan was to go back to Japan after
one year, but things changed. She fell in love with a Caucasian Canadian man. Akiko also
found that staying overseas provided an excuse for her to avoid her family.

Akiko decided to return to Vancouver after quitting her job in Japan. After having
exhausted her student visa, working holiday visa and tourist visa, she finally obtained landing
immigrant status. For her first three years in Canada, Akiko supported herself on her
savings, and lived a casual, stress-free life style. When her savings dwindled and she had to
face the reality of survival, she began a job search. She soon found a job in the immigration
industry and could support herself financially.
Her relationship with her boyfriend lasted for three years but did not work out. Akiko moved on. After breaking up with her boyfriend, Akiko dated a few Canadian men, but found these experiences disappointing. She started to wonder if there were any “decent” men available. During this period, Akiko decided to quit her job and start her own home-based business, working as an independent agent for immigration-related business. This proved more difficult than she had thought. Akiko struggled to establish her own business. At this time, Akiko met her future husband through a blind date. When she met Allen, Akiko felt an immediate connection with him. Akiko believed that because Allen also had ended a long-term relationship and had a similar family background, they shared many common experiences and a bond.

Besides Akiko’s connection with Allen, she also experienced the pressure to nest. She said, “I was like 33 that time already, and of course I wanted to have a child and as I was getting older, it was becoming more pressured.” She did not want to waste time playing dating games and Allen said he felt the same way. She said, “I thought my husband would be a very sensitive person because from the beginning. I am a very open person, and I told him what I like and what I don’t like, I didn’t want to waste my time. We kind of talked about our criteria - what we want in [a] partner, and I thought he had pretty much the same thing [I wanted] and we agreed [on] almost everything.” They wanted to give their relationship a try. Akiko moved into Allen’s apartment two months after they met. Soon after that, Akiko found herself pregnant. Allen and she felt pressured to marry. Everything happened so fast that Akiko found herself settling into the role of a full-time mother and housewife before she even realized it. She put aside her career plan and did not know whether it would ever resume.
On a typical day, Allen got up early for work and Akiko stayed home with the baby. Since she was nursing, Akiko never got a break from the baby. Allen usually returned home in the early afternoon. Staying home all day with the baby, Akiko found herself eager for adult conversations. Yet, she always told herself that she should let Allen sleep first because he was tired from work. She explained her behaviours: “I have the tendency to be perfect...I have the tendency to be a good girl...therefore I have the tendency of reading what they want, not want I want...I put my needs off and put his needs first.”

Instead of initiating a conversation with Allen, Akiko often took the baby out for grocery shopping so Allen could have a quiet nap. Akiko would return home from shopping and cook supper. Often she cooked while the baby was “lying on the floor and screaming at me.” Sometimes Allen would play with the baby. Akiko commented, “He is pretty good that way but not as good as I want him to be.” Allen usually sat in front of TV while eating his supper. Sometimes he would do the dishes after the meal. Sometimes he would help by taking care of the baby and giving her a bath. On weekends, Allen often asked Akiko what she wanted to do or where she wanted to go. “Since I am cooped up in the house with her, he knows I am not happy and probably also feels pressured to entertain me or take me out.” “I guess he is trying his best. I don’t necessarily find excitement [with his offers].”

Weekends were also housework days. Akiko felt that she did most of the housework and Allen only helped out after she started doing it or when she asked him to help. In Akiko’s mind, Allen did not assume responsibilities for any household or child-rearing tasks. She felt that Allen just assumed those tasks were all her jobs and he was doing her a favour when he helped. Based on the example Akiko illustrated, Allen only fed the baby when she asked him to and she always prepared the baby’s food; he did not pay attention to when the
baby needed to be fed or what food needed to be prepared. Although she did not think that Allen had an overt "male-dominating" attitude, like her father, Akiko felt that Allen had a subtle sense of entitlement as the breadwinner. "He did not abuse me physically. He does not tell me [that] this is women's job, [but] I felt subconsciously somewhere in his head he thinks he is the provider, he is working outside, bringing money home, therefore he did not have to do things." She once told him, "You are just a millennium version of my father."

Akiko recalled that in the beginning of their relationship, Allen cooked more often, but gradually cooking became her responsibility, because: "I have been cooking so much and obviously I can do a better job than him." Although she did not think housework should be women's work, she stated: "I am still probably playing housewife's role well because I was brought up that way, I was brainwashed that way...I can't just leave it there. It makes me feel guilty or makes me feel bad about myself." Akiko felt that she was "no good" if she could not be a good wife or a good mother. Sometimes, when Allen offered to help, she would say, "No, it's OK because you are tired from work." She also felt obligated to do more housework because she was not working and had no income to contribute.

Allen was in charge of the money. He always gave Akiko money to spend and she never had to ask for it. Although she told herself that she was doing an important job as a housewife and it was just a matter of different roles, Akiko could not stop feeling bad for her financial dependence. She remembered her father's words, "As long as you are depending on me financially, you are just like a dog. If I tell you to turn right, you have to turn until I tell you to turn left." Although Allen emphasized that his money was their money, Akiko still did not feel comfortable spending money or making major financial decisions because she did not feel it was her money.
Akiko found it stressful to be a full-time housewife and mother, but what she resented the most was being stuck in these roles from a sense of obligation. “I didn’t have to feel this way before because I was not in this position before. I am a good cook but I don’t enjoy cooking everyday out of obligation. I could enjoy cooking just because I feel like to cook.”

She felt she had lost her career, her freedom and her identity. “I am hating that I am living a typical wife’s life. That’s not me.” Yet, when asked what she was and what she wanted, Akiko did not have an answer. “That’s a difficult question,” she replied. Allen suggested that she could go to work and he would stay home taking care of the baby, but Akiko found it difficult to accept such an idea. On one hand, she wanted to have equality in the marriage, and she believed that “equality does not have to be specific roles.” “If I am better at cooking, I should do it, not because I am a woman.” On the other hand, she found it difficult to practice her ideal gender roles, because: “I was so brainwashed that men should be a certain way and women should be a certain way...I am playing a typical good wife’s role as well as expecting him to play a typical man’s role.” “I always want to respect my man...I want my husband to be bigger than me, not physically. I want my man to be stronger, [and] smarter.”

Akiko also wondered if Allen proposed this idea because he was too lazy and wanted to stop going to work or that he thought being a full-time mother was an easy job. She recalled comments that Allen had made, “What is your problem? All you have to do is breastfeeding!” Akiko felt hurt and angry over these words. “I am still angry!...He doesn’t understand what the hell I am going through, how difficult it is, and he makes comments (that) make me believe or make me feel that he thinks my job is fucking easy!”

Akiko felt Allen did not understand her in many other areas. Allen did not understand
how difficult it was being from a different culture. Things were not as easy for her as they were for him. Common sense in his culture was not necessarily common sense for her. For instance, when they decided to marry, Akiko expected Allen to be involved in the wedding preparation because she did not have her family or close friends around to help out. Allen’s common sense based on North American culture told him that the bride or bride’s family should be preparing for the wedding, and he was not even supposed to see her wedding dress until their marriage day. As a result, Akiko felt that Allen was not supportive in the preparation of their wedding. Often they did not know their common sense perceptions and they just assumed the other understood how to respond appropriately. As a result, Akiko and Allen often argued and threw around words like “This is common sense. Why can’t you do that?”

It bothered Akiko that Allen treated her like any other Canadian without taking into consideration her cultural background. “It’s like Ozzy Osborne or whatever it is on TV, and he started telling me [things about Ozzy Osborne] as if I shared exactly the same old day!” When Akiko told him that she did not know who Ozzy Osborne was, Allen appeared shocked, “What?” he said, “Don’t you know [who Ozzy Osborne is]?” Allen’s reaction made Akiko feel angry.

Akiko found most frustrating that Allen did not seem to have any understanding about what it was like to be an ESL speaker. As an ESL speaker, Akiko felt that her ability to function in English and make judgments was impaired. She did not feel as competent as she was in Japanese and lost confidence in herself. While speaking English, she experienced great anxiety. “English was just noise to me unless I have concentration...It is lots of work on the brain. It does not just come in and come out of our mouths”.

Sometimes she misunderstood Allen’s words because she did not pay full attention or
did not hear what he said. It hurt her deeply when Allen responded in an impatient tone like,
“What are you talking about?” It made Akiko feel stupid and inferior. “It really hurts me,
making me feel I am small. I basically find it ignorant and disrespectful.” The language
problem worsened during their arguments. “If I say something...he can basically play with
the words I use. He can just pick on my words and pull the topic totally somewhere else.”
Akiko grew more and more nervous about arguing with Allen. She felt pressured to find the
right words so he would not pick on them or switch the topic. Akiko hated it when Allen
used big words during their arguments. It made her feel insulted and belittled. Although
Akiko did not think Allen did it on purpose, she sometimes wondered if Allen unconsciously
used his language advantage to overpower her. “If he is doing it on purpose, I will divorce
him right now!” Akiko said it jokingly. She felt frustrated and powerless that no matter how
many times she told him that his behaviour hurt her, Allen continued to do the same thing
over and over again.

Akiko felt it unfair that, “language and cultural understanding were always 100% on
my shoulders.” When they visited her parents in Japan, Akiko had to be the interpreter and
the tour guide because Allen could not speak Japanese. When she complained, Allen told her
that she knew he could not speak Japanese when they first met. “But the same goes, right?
He should have known English is my second language, so it should be from both sides to
compromise or to make efforts to understand the difference.”

Akiko found it difficult to express herself completely in English. “With my English, I
can probably say things grammatically right enough for people to understand but it’s not
necessarily right for what I really want to say.” Akiko could not feel connected with the
English language and she could not really feel the real feelings behind the words. "I can say I love you, but I don’t get the connection with that word." Sometimes she could not find the right words to describe her emotions. "Emotional thing is the most difficult thing to describe and express, even probably with your own language. But it’s even more difficult with English. My husband does not understand it. It makes me feel like it has something to do with my language ability."

Akiko perceived a serious communication problem in their marriage but she did not think language was the real issue. "It was more so like mentality, sense of values each person has. Even if you have very good command in language, it doesn’t necessarily mean the other person you are talking to would understand you.” She believed that an intellectual gap stood between them and that Allen could not match his with hers. "He is not a great communicator. He is not a great listener, and I sometimes feel maybe he is stupid, when I am frustrated and angry in communicating with him.”

Akiko also felt there were not enough emotional connections between Allen and her, which she felt to be the most important value in a relationship. She saw Allen as "mechanical" and unable to understand feelings. "Many people can call him a family man because he gets up early in the morning, goes to work and comes back home after work, and spends time with his family, but it’s a tricky part. Well, physically he is spending time with us, but not necessarily emotionally...I feel like he is just living in his little tiny world with his TV."

Akiko agreed that Allen tried his best to make her happy, but his efforts failed to impress her because she felt he did not understand her nor treated her with respect. "As long as I am feeling he is disrespectful and ignorant, he can be wasting his time and energy doing
something totally wrong, right? Unless he knows and understands what pleases me, what I like, what I need, what is important to me, right? He can be spending hundreds of dollars for something I absolutely hate.”

She felt powerless and hopeless because no matter how hard she tried to explain her feelings to Allen, he seemed not to understand them and the problem remained unresolved. Akiko grew frustrated when Allen asked her to explain her feelings and thoughts over and over again. “I am not responsible for his understanding ability.”

Sometimes Allen would say that she did not try hard enough to explain herself, which made Akiko feel that Allen blamed her for their problems. “Before I got pregnant he blamed it PMS, so basically in my eyes he can find anything to blame for. If we are arguing about something, it’s my English, it’s my tone of voice, it’s my attitude, it’s my personal problem, it’s my PMS, it’s my problem, issue. It’s something else to be blamed. But hormonal imbalance does not create problems. It may cause you to be short tempered, irritable and impatient with things, but problems are there and bothering you.”

Overall, Akiko felt unequal in her marriage and dissatisfied. Even though she did not find it to be a bad marriage, neither did she find it an ideal marriage. She wanted a supportive, respectful relationship with equality, fairness, and understanding, but she felt the absence of these qualities in her relationship with Allen. “If it wasn’t for her (the baby), I probably would have left him.”

Sometimes Akiko wondered why she had married Allen in the first place. She wondered whether she would be happier if she could better integrate Japanese and Canadian culture. She believed that some women who intermarried were more content because they could adapt to a new culture more readily. She found it difficult to do so. She also wondered
if she might be more satisfied if she had only resided in Canada for a short period of time. Perhaps she would have maintained her innocence and her appreciation for Canadian men. Akiko believed subconsciously that she avoided Japanese men because she did not like their male-dominating behaviours. However, after all her years living in Canada, Akiko has grown to feel that Canadian men did not necessarily have a more equalitarian gender role attitude than Japanese men. “On the surface, it’s just different, but the mentality is not necessary different from Japanese men.” She grew to believe that Canadian men were just more expressive than Japanese men that they were accustomed to say nice things to women, but “they were actually less responsible and more immature.”

Akiko thought many Japanese girls were unrealistic in their perceptions of Caucasian men and interracial marriage. Her interracial marriage provoked many envious looks and comments from other Japanese girls. “[They envy us and] it doesn’t matter what kind of quality of life we have overseas.” She thought that many Japanese girls ended up marry ing losers. What would she say to Japanese girls who wished to marry a Caucasian man? “Don’t be silly!” Akiko responded with a laugh. She then turned serious: “You should never marry to a Canadian just because the reason that it’s cool. You should be married to anybody, Japanese, Korean, [or] East Indian, whoever it is for the reason of love.”

Note: Akiko’s feelings and perceptions of her husband changed since our initial interviews. While verifying my data analysis on her case, Akiko mentioned that things were much better between her and her husband, and she wrote it in one of our e-mail communications that “I said terrible things about my husband! Well, it’s been a while since the interview...my mental condition has been changed so I feel awkward with some of the comments I made back then.”
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*Note: This table reflects the first step of analysis, which summarizes the participant's specific area of experiences (right column). These experiences are grouped into four domains (left column).*
Table 2: Categories and Factors Contributing to Akiko’s Experiences

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Note: This table reflects the second step of analysis, which illustrates how a particular contributing factor (the second column) might have affected the participant’s specific areas of experiences (the third column), as identified in the previous table. The contributing factors are grouped into five categories (the first column).
Analysis

This section identifies factors that might have affected Akiko’s experiences related to issues of gender equality. Akiko’s experiences are separated into four different domains. Each domain contains various areas of experiences, as displayed in Table 1 (see Table 1). Factors contributing to Akiko’s experiences are summarized into the following five categories: (A) gender role beliefs, (B) financial and cultural resources, (C) socio-cultural factors, (D) personal-psychological factors, and (E) husband’s attitudes. Table 2 (see Table 2) displays how each factor might have contributed to Akiko’s experiences in each area as discussed in the following:

Category A: Gender Role Beliefs

Akiko’s gender role beliefs consisted of two factors: (1) influences from early socialization, and (2) new gender role awareness. It seemed that despite having acquired new gender role awareness, influences from Akiko’s early socialization continued to have a profound effect on many of her experiences. The following discusses how these two factors shaped Akiko’s experiences:

Factor A-1: Influences from early socialization. The influences Akiko received from her upbringing can be distinguished in four ways: First, she had been exposed to the gender role ideology prevalent in Japanese society. As Akiko recognized, “Japanese generally speaking are very disciplined. We have been shaped in certain ways. Women have to be feminine.” Second, she had been influenced by her parents’ gender role practice. She said, “Although my mother was working at night since I was little, my father was always in power and didn’t help her with housework and kid’s stuff.” As described previously, Akiko watched how her mother served her father and did everything at home. She said, “My father
is the King.” Third, the influence came from the gender role expectations her father had of her. She stated, “I am not allowed to be like a typical woman who is depending on men.” “He was strict, and he raised me to be different from other people. He often told me, ‘Don’t be like a typical woman’.” “He wanted me to be, I guess, independent.” “My father probably didn’t want me to be in that typical women’s position.” Fourth, she was affected by her parents’ differential treatment between her brother and her. Akiko described the situation:

*Although my father has told me, ‘Do not live like a typical woman,’ he also at the same time wanted me to do typical role things, such as housework, helping mother cooking, doing dishes that kind of stuff, which my brother didn’t have to do.*

*In the house, I have to be a good daughter – not good child - good daughter, meaning have to be doing girls’ stuff.*

*I saw lots of unfair things [between my parents]...It happened between my brother and myself, too. It was things that my brother was allowed to do, not necessarily I was allowed to do and I had to do certain things because I was a girl but my bother did not have to do.*

The following statement suggested that Akiko did not have much awareness of gender role issues early in her life. She said,

*I was programmed that way, I was brainwashed that way by the society, by my upbringing, by my father, by my parents’ relationship, so to me it was normal or natural or probably I was not really asking questions.*

How the influences from Akiko’s early socialization might have affected her experiences in the marriage was discussed in the following:

Influences from Akiko’s early socialization appeared to have affected her *gender role expectations*, her *gender role identity* and *gender role choice*. On one hand, Akiko seemed to be conditioned toward a traditional woman’s role and expected her husband to fulfill the provider’s role. As Akiko described it, “I am so brainwashed that men should be a certain
way and women should be a certain way...I am playing a typical good wife’s role as well as expecting him to play a typical men’s role.” The following statement gives further evidence that Akiko expected her husband to adopt a traditional masculine role. “I always want to respect my man – it’s not just respect any human being kind of respect. I want my husband to be bigger than me – not physically. I want my man to be stronger, smarter.” Although Akiko did not deliberately choose to be a full-time housewife, it appeared that her gender role expectations influenced her ready adaptation to that role. She even refused her husband’s offer to stay at home while she worked, which would have, in effect, switched their gender roles. In this manner, she made her gender role choice.

On the other hand, Akiko’s father’s gender role expectations of her seemed to have a different impact on her gender role identity. As she said, she would not be satisfied with a clerical job because “I always wanted to feel I am doing something different than other people.” She said in an interview:

*I never really acknowledged that I was after career, but again it is also my father’s influence because my father was always telling me and my brother, ‘You have to go to the best university and you have to be always the number one, and you have to be like a doctor or lawyer.’ - elite type of person.*

As a result, Akiko found herself “confused” about what she wanted to do as a woman, and she found it “difficult” to make a concrete gender role choice.

Akiko attributed her *gender role practice* to the result of her early in the following statements:

*With housework I do a lot and I am still playing the housewife’s role well because I was brought up that way, [and] I am brained washed that way.*

*I am doing all the house stuff, subconsciously thinking it’s my duty. And even if he offers me help, I will say “No, that’s OK because you are tired from work.*

*Influences from Akiko’s upbringing also seemed to have impacted her gender role*
behaviours, specifically in her interaction with her husband as in the following example:

Of course after he comes home, I want to speak with a real adult after all day spending with this little creature. But I put my needs off, and put his needs first. I try to take her out for a walk, so he can sleep quietly without any interruption. And then in the meantime, I can do grocery shopping, and again prepare for dinner, get dinner ready.

Akiko identified the influence of her upbringing on her gender role practice in the following statement:

My upbringing was strict that way. If my parents were more liberal, probably I would have been able to keep my nature better and show it more, but because of a very man-dominating society I lived, I always pushed myself, my nature, my really me somewhere else.

Factor A-2: New gender role awareness. Akiko seemed to have acquired her new gender role awareness through two processes. First, her new awareness appeared to occur in a gradual self-discovery process while she still resided in Japan. The changes in Akiko’s gender role beliefs could be observed in her different opinions toward her parents’ relationship: Before she developed this new awareness, Akiko had never questioned her parents’ relationship because “back then I didn’t know. For most children, parents are everything...I thought it was the way it should be.” As she grew more aware, her perception of their relationship changed. She stated, “By watching my parents’ relationship, I saw lots of unfair things. I hate unfairness.” Akiko also used the terms “I hate it” in describing how she felt about her parents’ preferential treatment of her brother. Her new gender role awareness also was reflected in her comments on patriarchy in Japanese society:

In older days in Japan non-equality was due to discrimination. Basically men were always in power, just because they were men, not because that individual man was smarter or stronger or mature, [but] just because they were men. That’s something I am against.

Second, Akiko’s cross-cultural experiences appeared to have enhanced her gender
role awareness in a way that challenged her racial and gender stereotypes of Caucasian men.

This was illustrated in her statement:

Now I know Canadian men were not necessarily feminist. On the surface, it’s just different attitudes but the mentality is not necessarily different from Japanese men...It’s just words, different expression they use from Japanese men. It doesn’t mean they are gentle.

How Akiko’s new gender role awareness might have affected her experiences in the marriage was discussed in the following:

Akiko’s new gender role awareness appeared to have affected her gender role expectations. These expectations were characterized by a desire for equality in male/female relationships as reflected in her statements: “I would not choose to be with a guy who is typical man-dominating.” “I did not necessarily choose interracial marriage but maybe subconsciously I had the tendency of avoiding Japanese men for their man-dominating, ridiculous idea.” Akiko’s gender role expectations also included an attitude of flexibility toward gender role practice, rather than the ascription of gender role. She stated, “I never believed that housework is women’s job,” and explained as follows:

I probably don’t believe in 100% equality in everything because men are better at doing something, and women are better at doing something...but it doesn’t have to be specific roles. If I am better at doing something - fixing TV - for instance, generally speaking people think it’s a men’s job, right? But if I am better at doing it, why don’t I do it? So, if I am better at cooking, I should do it, not because I am a woman [but] because I am better at doing it.

Akiko’s also expressed her other gender role expectations that included, “respect, understanding, connection, and communication”. As she said, “All these things were important to me,” and “Equality is respect.”

Akiko’s new gender role awareness seemed to have affected her gender role behaviours in that she was vigilant about maintaining equality in her relationship with her
husband and she often engaged her husband in negotiations on gender equality. Akiko stated that she often noticed areas of inequality and “had tried to discuss with him many times.”

**Category B: Financial and Cultural Resources**

This category included four factors: (1) employment, (2) financial resources and contributions, (3) cultural advantage, and (4) language resources. Although Akiko’s employment status and her financial resources and contributions were interrelated, they seemed to have different effects on her experiences, as discussed below:

**Factor B-1: Employment.** After she immigrated to Canada, Akiko found a job in the immigration business. She decided to start her own home business and “there was a little struggle.” Akiko’s employment status was found to have affected her gender role choice, which was reflected in her attribution to her gender role choice:

> There was not much question because if I was working outside for a company, probably it would have been more of an issue, and probably [more] discussion. We would have to discuss what I was gonna do or am I gonna take just six months maternity leave and go back to work, or am I gonna quite my job...I was already staying home, trying to do business from home, I didn’t have to go anywhere on any schedule.

How Akiko’s employment might have affected her experiences in the marriage is discussed in the following:

Akiko’s employment status seemed to have affected her gender role practice in the following way: “Although I was planning my business, but I wasn’t working the way people typically do. I wasn’t going to [a] certain place [at] certain time, so I was flexible, and this is his place that I moved into. I guess I felt obligated that I have to do housework.”

**Factor B-2: Financial resources and contributions.** The lack of financial contributions appeared to have influenced Akiko’s gender role practice since the beginning of her relationship with Allen. Akiko stated that she started doing more housework because
“he said I don’t have to pay the rent, I don’t have to pay for any house stuff so I was trying to be fair.” “I guess I felt obligated to do housework because I didn’t have to pay rent.” After Akiko became a full-time housewife and mother, the lack of financial resources made it impossible for her to contribute financially, which deepened her feeling of obligation in doing housework and childrearing tasks. She said, “Especially right now I am not working to make money so I feel probably more obligated [to do housework].”

The lack of financial resources and contributions also seemed to have affected Akiko’s sense of financial ownership and led her to limit her financial autonomy, as reflected in the following statements: “Although he says that this is our money, I don’t necessarily feel this is our money.” “I feel I have to [ask him when I want to spend money] because I am not making money.” Akiko recognized that she had limited her financial decision-making power due to her lack of financial resources and contributions. She said, “I am probably giving him more power... Maybe it’s all in my head - I am not making money.”

Akiko’s lack of financial resources and contributions appeared to have influenced her sense of personal power, as reflected in her following statement:

I didn’t have to feel this way because I wasn’t in this position so it was more enjoyable to be a typical woman sometimes as well as a career woman. It was in a way balanced for me, but now I lost my job, my career and that kind of independence.

Factor B-3: Cultural advantage. It appeared that the uneven cultural advantage between Akiko and her husband had affected their level of cultural adjustment. Akiko stated that because she lived in her husband’s country and she was not as familiar with North American culture as her husband, she was under the pressure to learn more about his culture. The cultural adjustment pressure Akiko experienced was reflected in her response to her husband when he was surprised that she did not know who Ozzy Osborne was. She said to
him, "Excuse me? I have been here only for eight years and I am Japanese, not a Canadian."

**Factor B-4: Language resources.** Akiko described her struggle as an ESL speaker in the following statements:

*And even though we now speak English probably well enough and many people say "Wow, your English is good", but still it is lot of work on the brain...It doesn’t just come in and come out of our mouth.*

*Since English is his first language and I always have this fear or anxiety of my language ability just because it is not my first.*

How Akiko’s language resources might have affected her experiences in the marriage was discussed in the following:

The language barriers Akiko encountered appeared to have affected her **sense of personal power** in the following ways: First, the language barriers affected Akiko’s ability to express herself, as she identified:

*But with my English, I can probably say things grammatically right enough for people to understand but it’s not necessary right for what I really want to say."

*When I say something important to me, most of the time, it’s like emotional thing. Emotional thing is the most difficult thing to describe and express, even probably with your own language. But it’s even more difficult with English.*

Second, the language barriers affected Akiko’s self-esteem, sense of self and sense of reality, as she recognized in the following statements:

*I felt I was less intelligent because of the language barrier... I have lost lots of confidence.*

*Before especially when I was in Japan, I was always clear about other people as well as about myself, but I lost that ability due to the language.*

*I can’t necessarily associate English with feelings. If someone says something nice to me, I understand it as words. I don’t feel it.*

*The longer I live here, the more confused I am getting. For example, like living on the moon, I feel like my legs, my feet are not on the ground. I feel I am totally detached from the world, and even my own world. That’s why I said that I have been*
confused in the last few years... Often when I am saying the same things in English doesn’t necessarily I feel it.

I am a very expressive person so for my needs of expressing feelings, my English is not good enough and communication is super important to me. So for me, living in a second language is losing my power, a big loss.

Third, the language barriers were found to have decreased Akiko’s cultural competency, as she attributed:

*English is just noise to me unless I have concentration... If you are thinking about something else, if it is my own language in Japanese, I can probably write and listen to somebody at the same time, but I can’t do it with English. English is just noise to me.*

*Probably because of the language issue, I found it was so difficult to connect with new people here in English.*

*With English my judgment level goes down. I am not sure if I am making right judgment, especially on people, and I don’t know if I should trust that person or not.*

Finally, the different level of English proficiency between Akiko and Allen seemed to have affected her power in the conflict process, as these statements indicated:

*Especially in an argumentative situation, people have the tendency to be right and to make the other wrong, and it is my husband’s first language which is already unfair.*

*If I could speak Japanese in my marriage, I would be more confident in myself [and] I would have a higher self-esteem.*

Category C: Socio-cultural Factors

The only factor identified in this category is acculturation.

Factor C-1: Acculturation. The acculturation process Akiko went through appeared to have affected her **gender role expectations**. As Akiko pointed out, she had become more demanding in her expectations. The following statement illustrates Akiko’s changes in gender role expectations:

*The shorter length I stay here, probably I have more smog or clouded eyes... The guys open door for you and then you feel, ‘How nice!’*
But in my case, it probably would have been easier [for me] to be happy and satisfied in a relationship with my partner when I was here shorter because I was kind of innocent and I probably still had that kind of mindset or the tendency to look up to Caucasian people or Canadian people. But as I stay here longer, I get more experience from working with Canadians, and I have seen more Canadians, and I am becoming more realistic...I am looking at Canadian people more real.

If you know less about everything, you have a better chance to be happy, but if you know a lot, you have lots of knowledge of everything, you get more confused because you know better.

Akiko also identified that the acculturation process has changed her gender role behaviours in that she no longer behaved like a typical Japanese girl, as expected in Japanese society. She said: “It is very stressful for me to meet Japanese business people because in the last few years or several years of living in Canada I became more North Americanized - the way I talk, the way I act, and the way I think even without really noticing it myself.”

Categories D: Personal-Psychological Factors

This category included the following five factors: (1) self-identity, (2) cultural identity, (3) personality, (4) self-esteem, and (5) attribution and interpretation.

Factor D-1: Self-identity. Akiko reflected her self identity in the following statements:

I could live happily without any status or condition and that's what I have always been feeling since I was young. Money is not important, status is not important, and the most important thing is peace of mind, but it's contradictory – I was always trying to be better than other people.

The biggest problem I have is to accept myself for what I am, who I am and as I said earlier that I became confused about my identity in the past few years, especially. I don't know what I am and I don't know what I am trying to accept.

I just want to be happy but I don't know what makes me happy. Sometimes or quite often for quite a long time, I feel wherever I go, whomever I am with, whatever I am doing, maybe I am a person who can’t be happy.

How Akiko’s self-identity might have affected her experiences in the marriage was discussed in the following:
It seemed that in spite of Akiko’s desire to be herself, she was constantly driven by her father’s expectations to be an “elite,” and “better than others.” Akiko’s ambivalent self-identity seemed to have hindered the development of her gender role identity and her gender role choice. On one hand, she said, “I am not sure if I want to continue my career.” “I never really acknowledged that I was after career.” “I wouldn’t say it (working) makes me happier but it would be probably healthier for me because it’s healthier than being cooped up in the house - even outside - with her.” On the other hand, she claimed, “I am hating that I am living a typical wife. That’s not me.” As a result, Akiko seemed to have a hard time making a clear gender role choice and found herself confused.

Factor D-2: Cultural identity. Akiko’s cultural identity is reflected in the following statement:

*The longer you live [here], you realize more there are good side of Canadian, bad side of Canadian, as well as bad side of Japan and good side of Japan, but it’s so hard to put both good sides together, keep only good side of Japanese culture, and then only keep good side of Canadian. That’s what I have been trying to do but it’s so confusing and difficult because sometimes it’s totally opposite sense of value, like common sense or whatever, so sometimes doesn’t mingle well.*

How Akiko’s cultural identity might have affected her experiences in the marriage was discussed in the following: Akiko attributed the confusion in her gender role identity to the confusion in her cultural identity. When asked what she wanted to be as a woman, Akiko did not have an answer. She responded:

*The longer I am in this kind of situation, like living in a foreign country, speak a second language, my language ability and my understanding of myself are going low, kind of confused because I have two different languages in my head so I can’t complete my thoughts either in English or Japanese. My culture background - Japanese background - is kind of mixed with Canadian now, and it is not very clear.*

*Until I turned into thirties, it became more confusing and I am still confused now and I don’t know how to analyze myself anymore and I often feel I don’t know myself anymore.*
Factor D-3: Personality. Akiko identified “perfectionism” as one of her personal traits. As she stated: “[I have to be] a good woman, which is like [a] good wife, good mother, good cook, good house keeper. But not only that, I also have to be a perfect human being.” How Akiko’s perfectionism might have affected her experiences in the marriage was discussed in the following:

Akiko’s perfectionist trait seemed to have affected her gender role identity. As she described it: “I have to be a perfect human being. I have my career but I have never thought I was a very career-oriented person.” Her perfectionism also appeared to have influenced her gender role practice as expressed in her household and childrearing task performance. She said of her housework: “I just can’t leave it there. I have to do it. ...It makes me feel guilty or makes me feel bad about myself - I am no good.”

Akiko’s perfectionism also appeared to have influenced her gender role behaviours as reflected in her interaction with her husband: “I have the tendency of being a good girl [in] my whole life therefore I have the tendency of reading what they want, not what I want.” “I was always thinking what should I do, what should I say, how should I act in any situation, rather than what I want.” “I think I was naturally just doing things to please other people.”

Akiko’s perfectionist trait also seemed to have affected her sense of personal power in that she was never satisfied with her language ability. This dissatisfaction seemed to have affected her perception of her actual language competency. She said, “Once I clear one level, and then I expect me to go higher and higher so never [good enough].”

Akiko identified that her perfectionism to have some influences on her gender role expectations. The following statement suggested that Akiko might have a high expectation of her husband:
Of course my husband plays with her [our baby girl]. He is pretty good that way but not as good as what I want him to be.

My mother said, "What is your problem? He is nice. He helps you, he does dishes and he says thank you." [He said], "I appreciate your effort to cook such a great meal." "I love you for being a great mother to our child." Blah, blah, blah... Am I expecting too much?

Factor D-4: Self-esteem. Akiko’s self-esteem was reflected in her self-concept and self-confidence. As she stated: “I think I have never been confident enough in my self.” “I often call myself as a negative person, and hard on myself. I am never good.” Akiko’s self-esteem seemed to have affected her sense of personal of power in the following ways. First, although cognitively she believed that “I am doing an important job - it’s just a different role,” emotionally Akiko seemed to feel unworthy for being financially dependent. The following statement illustrates this feeling:

Maybe it has something to do with my own experience with my father. He said to me that “As long as you are depending on me financially, you are just like a dog. If I told you to turn right, you have to turn right, until I told you to turn left.”

This feeling seemed to have further affected Akiko’s sense of financial ownership, her financial autonomy and her financial decision-making power. As discussed earlier, she gave away her power in these areas.

Second, Akiko’s self-esteem seemed to have affected her perception of her actual language competency. Her diminished sense of her language competency also decreased her sense of personal power. During the interview, Akiko displayed a high level of English proficiency, but she did not seem to perceive it that way. The following comments display Akiko’s lack of confidence in her English language competency:

Even though teachers at the ESL school suggested me to go out there and find a job, I always had the tendency to put myself down – my English shouldn’t be good enough to get a job here.
The reason why I didn't do it (looking for a job) earlier was that I wasn't confident enough.

Akiko’s perception of her language competency also appeared to have affected her sense of personal power as suggested in the following comments:

* I feel vulnerable in English.

* My husband doesn’t understand it. It makes me feel like it has something to do with my language ability.

* He doesn’t understand what the hell I am talking about. It makes me feel like ‘Is that my English?’ Is that because of the way I talk?

Akiko seemed to have overlooked the social competence she displayed in her ability to establish a career and acquire her landing immigrant status. This might reflect issues with self-esteem that further affected Akiko’s self-concept and led her to overlook her achievement - an achievement in which she could have acquired a stronger sense of personal power.

Factor D-5: Attribution and interpretation. The combination of Akiko’s self-identity issue, her perfectionism and her self-esteem issue seemed to have affected her attribution and interpretation of her experiences, and to a great extent, might have decreased her sense of personal power. Akiko’s attribution and interpretation style was reflected in her statement that, “I always focused on the negative sides.” Akiko’s view of her current gender role as a full-time housewife illustrates her interpretation style. She perceived this role as a “loss of my own career, loss of freedom, loss of identity” and “I am hating that I am living a typical wife. That’s not me.” Akiko’s interpretation of her gender role coupled with her financial dependence on her husband seemed to have decreased her sense of worth.

Category E: Husband’s Attitudes

This category contains five factors: (1) husband’s gender role attitudes, (2) husband’s
financial attitudes, (3) husband’s cultural attitudes, (4) husband’s conflict resolution attitudes, and (5) husband’s emotional connections.

**Factor E-1: Husband’s gender role attitudes.** Akiko described Allen’s gender role attitudes in the following statements:

*My husband never said that—‘It’s your job. You are supposed to be cleaning the house.’ or ‘You are supposed to be cooking meal. You are supposed to be serving me’—He doesn’t say it. He doesn’t show those attitudes.*

*Of course he is not man-dominating as bad as typical Japanese men or like my father. But it’s just...I once called him, ‘You are just a millennium version of my father.’ So he doesn’t abuse me physically, he doesn’t tell me, ‘This is women’s job. You are supposed to do this.’ or ‘You’ll have to bring me toothpicks.’ or ‘You’ll have to bring me this and that,’ as my father... Of course my husband is not that way.*

*I wouldn’t say he is man-dominating, and he believes he isn’t, and he believes he is very gentle and nice to me, but sometimes probably what he says, I feel subconsciously somewhere in his head he thinks he is the provider, he is working outside, bringing money home, therefore he doesn’t have to do things. If he does something, like doing dishes, I think he is doing...he thinks that he is doing a favour.*

*I feel he is not necessary...you know...man and woman equal type of person because first of all he doesn’t understand what the hell I am going through, how difficult it is, and he makes comments makes me believe or makes me feel that he thinks my job is fucking easy. See one good example of his comments really bothered me, still now. ‘What’s your problem? All you have to do is breastfeeding!’*  

*Just from his every day attitude, I can feel [it] although my husband doesn’t do chauvinistic things...I can feel it [that he did not have an equal mentality]. Plus his parents, and his mother was always like housewife, very typical traditional so the father is the provider, the money maker, and the mother is the homemaker, so probably it’s very normal and natural in his eyes.*

How Allen’s gender role attitudes might have affected Akiko’s experiences in the marriage was discussed in the following: First, it seemed to have affected her gender role autonomy, as reflected in his willingness to support and accommodate Akiko’s gender role choice. Akiko stated:

*I said I am not happy or something like that. And he said, ‘What do you want to do? You want to go out to work? You want to stay home?’ In that sense he is more equal,
like he is a very equal person.

Although Akiko felt trapped in her gender role, it seemed that she actually did have autonomy in making her gender role choices.

Second, Allen’s gender role attitudes seemed to have affected the gender role practice in their marriage. Akiko stated that she “pretty much” did all of the housework and her husband did “nothing” after returning home from work. She described their division of household and childrearing tasks as following:

He does [some housework], but not regularly. Either I do ask for it [or] when weekends he is home and I start doing things, then he probably does.

Of course he plays with her. If I ask, he does things like, “Would you feed her?” But I make her food. If it’s bottle, I prepared the bottle and all he has to do is just… and everything is ready for him, and typically I would describe him… he comes home, has a shower, has a nap if it’s possible, but then sit in his chair watch TV, and eat, and does dishes, not everyday, probably out of guilt he feels.

Factor: Husband’s financial attitudes. Akiko’s following statements depict Allen’s attitudes toward finances:

He said I don’t have to pay the rent. I don’t have to pay for any house stuff.

He gives me money, not regularly, like he just gives me money here and there.

He says, “This is our money.”

[When I felt that his money was not my money], he said it many times, “It’s your problem. It’s not my problem. I am not the one who is saying that. You are the one who is saying that, and then you must have an issue over money.”

How Allen’s financial attitudes might have affected Akiko’s experiences in the marriage was discussed in the following: Allen’s attitudes toward finances appeared to have affected the financial resource distribution in their marriage. He seemed willing to share his financial resources with Akiko and this seemed to have provided Akiko with a certain degree of financial autonomy. As she said, “I have never really have problems [for not having
money to spend]. [It was not like] I didn’t have any money to go buy groceries.”

**Factor E-3: Husband’s cultural attitudes.** Akiko described Allen’s cultural attitudes in the following statements:

*He basically thinks most of the time I am just one of those Canadians with a different background...He treats me just like [treat] every other Canadian people...I think it doesn’t really apply to his head I am actually from a different culture...Like he never has anybody [in his life] like myself coming from overseas, and he has never been to Japan until this March ...So he has no idea.*

*It’s like Ozzy Osborne or whatever it is on TV or what, and he started telling me, as if I share exactly the same old days. Yeah, like “Who is Ozzy Osborne?” And then he said, “Don’t you know? What?”*

*If somebody in front of you [comes] from a different language area and who doesn’t speak your language 100%, you should be a little easy and more understanding, instead of, “What are you talking about?” that kind of attitude, right?*

*Another part is like for Japanese people L and R are very difficult. I always ask him “Is it L first and R?” You know sometimes one word has L and R both, and I don’t know which comes first, and I have to make sure I understand the meaning and how to pronounce, but it seems he just takes it for granted that I know it. Or when we are specially argue about something, he used big words.*

How Allen’s cultural attitudes might have affected Akiko’s experiences in the marriage was discussed in the following: Allen’s attitudes appeared to have affected the level of **cultural adjustment** and **linguistic adjustment** between him and Akiko. Akiko stated:

*[The language pressure] is 100% on my shoulder, and the cultural understanding [is] 100% on my shoulder.*

*For instance, this time when we were in Japan of course he took it for granted that I would interpret everything for him.*

*When we were in Japan he talked, “Hey, you already knew when we met the first that I didn’t speak any Japanese language.”*

Allen’s cultural attitudes also seemed to have affected Akiko’s **linguistic power** in the marriage, as well as her **sense of personal power** in which it had jeopardized her self-esteem.
Akiko stated:

\[ \text{When we are specially argue about something, he used big words, and I take it as an insult. Would you talk to your five year kid like you talk to university students? No, right?...I am an intelligent person, I believe, but I feel like I am stupid at times because the way he talks to me or treat me.} \]

\[ \text{And if I say something, if he decides to do so he can basically play with the words I use. He can just pick on my words and pull the topic totally somewhere else. That's how I feel.} \]

\[ \text{If you are talking to somebody who doesn't know better, you can take advantage of her or him, and that's what I feel that my husband is doing sometimes subconsciously.} \]

\[ \text{He sometimes asks me simple question, "Did you do this?" I might have missed "did" part, and then it would be a different story, right? Maybe I just took it as "Do you do this?", or "Are you gonna do this?". Sometime I give wrong answer, and sometimes he gives me kind of impatient kind of voice, and it really hurts me. I think...It hurts me, makes me feel I am small, I basically find it ignorant, disrespect.} \]

\[ \text{He often said, "You are not trying hard enough to explain to me." That's one of the things he says to me, and I think it's lowering my self-esteem.} \]

\[ \text{He isn't doing that on purposely, but he keeps doing it even though I have tried to explain how much it hurts, and how much it bothers me and how bad it affects my self-esteem. And the problem is that he doesn't understand it.} \]

\[ \text{It depends on who you are talking to. Some people you feel totally comfortable with, and you feel relaxed and take your time to express yourself, but on the other hand with other people you feel totally opposite and it makes you nervous and you feel, "I have to find the right words, otherwise he or she will just jump and pick on the words." And then it goes off topic what you really wanted to talk about. And that happens often between me and my husband.} \]

\[ \text{I feel I have no power at all because in this interracial marriage - although it is interracial marriage - I feel like I am more responsible for adjusting, and compromising, and everything possible...it's so unfair.} \]

Factor E-4: Husband's conflict resolution attitudes. Akiko described Allen's attitudes in resolving their conflicts as following:

\[ \text{Before I got pregnant he blamed it PMS, so basically in my eyes he can find anything to blame for. If we are arguing about something, it's my English, it's my tone of voice, it's my attitude, it's my personal problem, it's my PMS, it's my problem, issue. It's something else.} \]
I get frustrated and I get emotional and I raise my voice and then it gives him a good excuse to basically walk away.

Allen’s conflict resolution attitudes appeared to have affect Akiko’s sense of personal power. She felt that she was only blamed for their problems and she was powerless in resolving their differences. She related:

Whenever we have problems, we can’t come to conclusion, we can’t resolve it.

We have communication problems...It’s actually the main problem we have in our relationship right now. It’s actually serious.

It is frustrating...The conversation doesn’t go anywhere.

Factor E-5: Husband’s emotional connections. Akiko stated that she believed that Allen was doing his best to make her happy. She described how he treated her in the following statement:

Since I am cooped up in the house with her, he knows I am not happy, and probably also feels pressured to entertain me or take me out, so almost every weekend he says. “So what are we gonna do? What do you want to do?”

How Allen’s cultural attitudes might have affected Akiko’s experiences in the marriage was discussed in the following: Based on Akiko’s above statement, Allen seemed to have displayed his willingness to connect with her, which indeed gave her certain decision-making power. Akiko acknowledged Allen’s efforts, but expressed a different perspective on them:

He thinks he is doing the best effort he could make to make me happy, and I believe it. But the thing is...for instance, if you don’t know why you fail something, how can you fix it? And after argument, he said he is sorry, but I said “Do you know what you are sorry for? If you don’t, you would do it again.”

As long as I am feeling he is disrespectful and ignorant, he can be wasting his time and energy doing something totally wrong, right? Unless he knows he understands what pleases me, what I like, what I need, what is important to me, right? He can be spending hundred of dollars for something I absolutely hate.
In Akiko’s eyes, Allen did not have enough emotional involvement with his family. She expressed her perception in the following statement:

_Maybe people can call him family man because he gets up early in the morning, go to work and come back home after work, and spend time with his family, but it’s a tricky part. Well, physically he is spending time with us, but not necessary emotionally...I feel like he is just living in his little tiny world with his TV._

Akiko also perceived that Allen did not understand her emotional needs, as she described it in the following statements:

_When I say something important to me, most of the time it’s like emotional thing. Emotional thing is the most difficult thing to describe and express, even probably with your own language. But it’s even more difficult with English. My husband doesn’t understand it._

_He is a more mechanical person, and he needs one plus one equals two type of logic, but human feelings are not that way, one plus one equals not necessary two._

_He doesn’t understand me. He doesn’t understand what the hell I am talking about, and I get really frustrated._

Based on Akiko’s perspective, Allen’s lack of emotional involvement and inability to understand her had affected her _sense of personal power_. She said: “I feel I am not getting enough respect, understanding, connection, and communication.” “It has never been [a] ‘BAD’, bad relationship, but it’s never been good enough for the ideal relationship I had in my mind.”

**Summary**

In the gender role domain, Akiko’s gender role expectations were torn between two sets of gender role beliefs – the influences from her early socialization and her new gender role, combined with the influences of her acculturation and her perfectionism. The influences from her early socialization, her self-identity, her cultural identity, and her perfectionism appeared to have shaped Akiko’s gender role identity, an identity eventually determined by
her employment status. Akiko's gender role practice also seemed to be affected by the influences from her early socialization, her employment status, her financial resources and contributions, her personality, and Allen's gender role attitudes. Under the influences from her upbringing as well as her personality, Akiko exhibited compromising behaviours while interacting with her husband, yet at the same time her new gender role awareness prompted her to assert herself in negotiating for more equality. Allen’s gender role attitudes appeared to have supported Akiko’s gender role autonomy.

In the financial and decision-making domain, Allen displayed a willingness to share his financial resources and provided Akiko with a certain degree of financial autonomy. However, Akiko’s self-esteem issues seemed to have amplified the negative effect of her lack of financial resources and contributions, and eventually decreased her sense of financial ownership, and led her to restrain her financial autonomy and financial decision-making power. Nonetheless, Allen’s effort at emotional connections seemed to have provided Akiko with decision-making power in areas other than finances.

In the culture and language domain, being a foreign wife who did not have the cultural advantage, Akiko was pressured to make more cultural adaptation. Allen’s cultural attitudes appeared to have affected the level of culture and linguistic adjustment between them. How he exercised his linguistic power also seemed to have decreased Akiko’s linguistic power in the sense that she was unable to assert herself or communicate more effectively.

In the personal power domain, the combination of many factors seemed to have decreased Akiko’s sense of personal power. The language barriers Akiko experienced seemed to have affected her sense of self and her cultural competency; Akiko’s self-esteem
issues appeared to have affected her interpretation of her gender role and worsened her feelings about inadequate financial resources and contributions, as well as blinded her about her cultural competency; the combination of her perfectionism and her self-esteem issues also appeared to have affected her perception of her actual English language competency. Finally, Allen’s lack of cultural sensitivity seemed to have further jeopardized Akiko’s confidence in her English language ability. His inability to understand the issue Akiko tried to address and his avoidance from the conflict left Akiko with a feeling of powerless in resolving their differences and achieving the respect and intimacy she desired.
Hiromi’s Case

Description of the Couple

Hiromi was a 35-year-old Japanese woman who had been living in Canada for the total of five years. Before settling down in Canada, Hiromi had been moving back and forth between Japan and Canada. At the time of the interview, Hiromi was pursuing a Ph.D. degree in social science. Hiromi’s husband Henry was born and raised in Canada. He had acquired a Ph.D. degree and was also working in the social science field. Hiromi and Henry had been married for seven years and they had a 6 month old son. Hiromi was a part-time student and a part-time mother. At the time of the interview, Henry was taking one year paternity leave and was staying home taking care of their child.

The Story

Hiromi was 11 when she told herself that she did not want to create a family like her own family. “I did not like it when I grew up, looking [at] my mother staying at home and taking care of kids and my father doesn’t do anything in the house.” She remembered it vividly because she surprised herself with her own awareness, “Wow, I am only 11 years old and thinking [is] already like this!” Hiromi’s parents were like many other Japanese couples in that her father was a salary man and her mother was a housewife. Hiromi found her father traditional, conservative and rigid. Even though he never overtly put down women, Hiromi could see his patriarchal attitudes in their daily lives. Since she was little, Hiromi had always resented her parents treating boys and girls differently. They always demanded girls to do housework but not boys, “just because they are boys.” They did not want to invest money on Hiromi’s education. They wanted her to go to a two-year junior college instead of university because “women did not have much career opportunity in Japan so going to four-year college
Hiromi was also frustrated with how she was treated as a woman. She felt restrained and had to behave in a certain way. “Many people are telling me what to do and how I should be behaving, how I am not being well as a woman or as a person. I have problem with the way Japanese society treating women.” Throughout her high school, she constantly felt being put down as a woman. She remembered that her teacher used to make derogatory comments about women.

Just like many teenagers, Hiromi wanted to be away from home. She was getting bored with her life and she wanted to do something different. In the last year of high school, Hiromi applied for a student exchange program in the United States. The one year in the States had further awakened her awareness of gender role issues. “I have some kind of awareness since I was a kid and they became clear once I went to America.” Hiromi felt that she was treated with more respect. “I was treated more as a human rather than a woman who is supposed to be playing secondary status.” I felt liberated from being a woman in the way that the society wants you to be...I was able to be myself more.” “I don’t think North America is completely gender equal or anything, but relatively speaking, if you compare with Japan, then it’s much easier to be here as a woman.”

After returning to Japan, Hiromi went to junior college but she did not want to settle for a clerical job. She wanted to become a professional so she decided to go to university in America after she completed her junior college education. Two years later, Hiromi went back to Japan with her Bachelor’s degree and started working. The discrimination against women became more obvious and unbearable to her. She felt that she had to “fight hard to be recognized” and to “prove myself more just because I am a woman.” However, she did
not protest the unfair treatment toward her because she took it as “that’s how things are” and “the whole society is structured and it’s hard to go away.”

Hiromi did not stay in Japan for long. She decided to pursue her study further and she came to Canada to study for a Master's degree. Her plan was to obtain a PH.D. degree and return back to Japan. She was concerned that as an immigrant and an ESL speaker, she would have more difficulties in pursuing academic work or finding a good job in North America. Hiromi did not really want to go back to Japan, but she thought realistically it would be easier for her. Even though women in Japan would have fewer career opportunities, Hiromi believed that once she had enough educational credentials and without the language barriers, she probably could get some professorship in Japan. She was prepared to deal with the patriarchy in Japan. She believed that more and more women were voicing their frustrations and she could join them in advocating for women’s right and make a difference in the Japanese society.

Things changed when Hiromi met her husband Henry who was also a graduate student through a mutual friend. They fell in love and got married two years later. When she decided to marry Henry, Hiromi also made a decision that she would be living in North America permanently. She thought about the possibility of them residing in Japan, but it would be really difficult for Henry to fit into the society or to find a good job because of the racial homogeneity in Japan and his language barriers. Once the decision was made, Hiromi knew that she would have to compromise her career. She thought that her best chance probably was to teach in colleges, but not universities. Even so, their life would still be easier if they stayed in North America.

After they got married, Henry needed to be in Japan for his post-doctoral work. They
moved to Japan and stayed for three years. Hiromi worked as a freelance translator during those three years. They then moved to America for Hiromi to start her PH.D. Two years ago, Hiromi and Henry moved to Japan again for one year for Hiromi's field work. They then returned to Canada and soon after they were joined by their first child. Since Hiromi did not have any employment and would not be eligible for any maternity leave or employment insurance, they decided for Henry to take a year paternity leave for their financial benefit.

In a typical day, Henry got up around 5:00 or 6:00 am in the morning and did some of his work from home. When the baby woke up around 8:30 am, Henry took care of the baby so Hiromi could sleep for two hours solid after getting up every two or three hours nursing the baby all night. Hiromi then got up around 10:30 and left home to work on her dissertation. She usually returned home around 6:00 pm and started preparing dinner. Two to three times a week, Henry would cook dinner. The one who did not cook would usually do the dishes. Sometimes Hiromi would clean the dishes because Henry usually went to bed at 9:00pm and "left a mess in the kitchen". Hiromi usually bathes the baby and puts him to bed. She then prepared her lunch and the baby's food for the next day. After both her husband and baby went to baby, Hiromi had some time to herself. She nursed her baby around midnight or 1am before she went to bed.

On weekends, Henry still got up early but he did not take care of the baby because Hiromi did not work on her dissertation. Hiromi took care of the baby in the morning, and they usually went grocery shopping or ran errands in the afternoon on one day of the weekend. The other day they did major cleaning around the house and they tried to divide the tasks equally. On a daily basis, Hiromi would do more cleaning here and there because Henry "did not see it", unless it was the cleaning day. Hiromi thought it was a typical man's
thing. Hiromi did not think their housework was equally divided so she was the one who did more. The share was 70/30. She did not really notice the unequal housework division before the baby was born because the amount of housework was very little. However, the amount of housework had increased dramatically after the baby was born and it became obvious to Hiromi that she was doing more housework.

Hiromi knew that Henry never asked her to do more housework but she still did more because “I am not working and I am not bringing money [home].” She felt that she could not ask for 50/50 share. Her rational was that they had to rely on Henry’s income so he needed to devote himself more to his work than she did; especially her work was a no-pay job. Henry was willing to share housework, but he did not always do it when Hiromi asked him to. “When I ask him to do housework, he always has all these reasons not to do it right now, and I can’t persuade him.” Sometimes Hiromi just picked up the work and did it herself.

“You see, even I oppose the way my parents are, the way they are functioning in their marriage, I am sure unconsciously because I was brought up in that society, in that family, [and] structure.” “Even if I oppose ideologically in my head, my body moves without my...so what I say, what I believe and what I do aren’t always the same.”

Hiromi did not think that she had less power in the marriage because of no income, but “put it this way, if I have more my own money than he does, maybe I will feel better.” She estimated that Henry made 70% of financial decisions but it was not about power. “I am not interested in managing money. It does not mean I don’t have power.” As long as they had enough money to spend, she did not care how Henry managed the money. Even so, they still discussed about major spending and other decisions. Neither of them would make a major decision without the other’s agreement. Hiromi had accesses to their join account, but
she did not feel comfortable spending money freely because she wanted to save for the family. “It’s not because I feel guilty or this is not my money and I shouldn’t be spending.” “Because I don’t bring money [home], that does not necessarily mean that I am worthless or anything.” Indeed, Hiromi felt well deserving because she believed that she had compromised her career so her husband could be doing what he wanted to do.

One thing that bothered her in their marriage was that Henry always required logical thinking and reasoning in their conversations. They had different thinking patterns due to their cultural difference. As an Asian, Hiromi tended to think in a circular way. Henry tended to think in a linear way. She felt that Henry was pressuring her to think more like him - to think in a Western way. “He tried to understand me but when I start doing all these non-linear reasoning things, he does not seem to have much patience...he won’t listen to me unless it’s logical, almost.” Being in the academic field where logical thinking was more valid and valued, Henry was equipped with the ability to think and argue logically whenever they got into a debate. Hiromi believed that it gave Henry more power but she did not think he was trying to undermine her on purpose. “He is not doing it on purpose. It’s like he doesn’t know he is doing it.” She did not think that Henry was capable of thinking in a circular fashion so she often compromised more and to adapt to the Western thinking pattern. It frustrated her. “That’s the communication gap that we have.”

This communication gap became bigger became more obvious when they were fighting. When Hiromi could not express herself well and Henry criticized her for not being logical and not explaining herself enough, she could not help but attribute it to her lack of the language ability in English. “He can explain what he wants to and he doesn’t have to struggle explaining himself.” Hiromi believed that “anyone who speaks the first language in
a relationship has more power”, and Henry was ascribed more power because English was
his first language and was the dominating language in their marriage. However, Hiromi did
not think their power dynamic in the language area was totally one-sided because Henry also
spoke Japanese and was making an effort to improve his Japanese. It gave Hiromi some
power because sometimes she could correct Henry’s Japanese, and also “he knows how it’s
like to be a second language speaker.” Although they do have some misunderstandings and
miscommunications due to the languages, Hiromi did not think language issues had affected
her self-esteem in the marriage. Despite her struggle with English, Hiromi never hesitate to
confront Henry whenever she perceived unfairness. “Tolerance is not in my dictionary.”
Hiromi also fought back during their argument. “Even if is not necessary to do so, I always
automatically [say] no, I am not wrong.”

The language issue did affect Hiromi in the world outside of the home. “The fact I
have to communicate in English everyday, it puts me to a secondary citizen status.” Hiromi
believed that she had good self-esteem, but “Even I consider myself as an intelligent person,
but sometimes because of my accent and the way I express myself, people don’t treat me
with respect.” Despite being in North America for a long time and being an academic,
Hiromi still found it difficult to communicate in English, especially when she tried to express
some complicated thoughts. Hiromi perceived language as a major loss after she immigrated
to North America. During the interview, Hiromi laughed, “That is sad that I can’t come up
with too much gains…I can talk about lot of losses.” Other than the language, she saw the
job status as a major loss. “My graduate school friends who went back to Japan and have all
these professor jobs, which I envy them.” Despite feeling lots of losses, Hiromi felt that she
had gained freedom and self-esteem for being able to be herself.
Has she gained gender equality in an interracial marriage? Hiromi stated that gender issues were the main reason she left Japan, and it did come across her mind that marrying a Canadian man would be easier for her. After living in North America for all these years, Hiromi did not think that interracial marriage would necessarily guarantee more equality. She had seen many Japanese women being taken advantage of in interracial relationships. “Being non-Caucasian and being women put you in a secondary position from the beginning.” Yet, she knew that she was given a higher status by some Japanese people for being in an interracial marriage. People often thought that she got a good deal. Even her parents thought she was lucky to find a Caucasian who could tolerate her opinionated personality. “You will never find one in Japan.” “People see that because my husband is Caucasian therefore something is very special about our marriage…which is an illusion”

However, as the interview progressed, Hiromi started to realize that it was unthinkable for Japanese people that her husband would take a paternity leave and stay home for child-rearing. It was also unbelievable for Japanese people that she never got up and cooked breakfast for her husband. As she talked, she started to see that Henry actually had put in a lot of time in child-rearing, which she did not see before. She became more confused about her own perception. Eventually, she realized that Henry was doing more than what she thought. “There is the reality and the way I see it. The reality may be close to 50/50, but I don’t see it that way.” She concluded that she was more critical and pickier than other people because she studied issues of gender equality and she had more awareness in these topics. “I never feel satisfied the way things work in the house. I always see it as gender issues.” At the end of the interview, Hiromi’s perceptions and opinions about the equality in her marriage had changed. “Objectively, I guess I have more gender equality, I have to say.”
She had gained more appreciation for her husband and was ready to give him a big hug and tell him "You are such a wonderful husband."
Table 3: Domains and Areas of Experiences in Hiromi’s Case

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Domain</th>
<th>Area of Experiences</th>
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<td>1-2. Gender role identity</td>
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<td>1-3. Gender role choice</td>
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<td>1-4. Gender role autonomy</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>4. Personal Power</td>
<td>4-2. Sense of personal power</td>
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Note: This table reflects the first step of analysis, which summarizes the participant’s specific area of experiences (right column). These experiences are grouped into four domains (left column).
Table 4: Categories and Factors Contributing to Hiromi’s Experiences

<table>
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<th>Factor</th>
<th>Area of Experiences</th>
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<td>A-4. New gender role awareness</td>
<td>Gender role expectations</td>
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<td>Gender role behaviours</td>
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<tr>
<td>B. Financial and Cultural Resources</td>
<td>B-1. Employment</td>
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<tr>
<td>C. Socio-Cultural Factors</td>
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<td></td>
<td>C-2. Acculturation</td>
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<td>D. Personal-Psychological Factors</td>
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<td>D-2. Self-esteem</td>
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<td>E. Husband’s Attitudes</td>
<td>E-1. Husband’s gender role attitudes</td>
<td>Gender role autonomy</td>
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<td>E-2. Husband’s financial attitudes</td>
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<td>E-3. Husband’s cultural attitudes</td>
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<td>Sense of personal power</td>
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Note: This table reflects the second step of analysis, which illustrates how a particular contributing factor (the second column) might have affected the participant’s specific areas of experiences (the third column), as identified in the previous table. The contributing factors are grouped into five categories (the first column).
Analysis

This section identifies factors that might have affected Hiromi’s experiences related to issues of gender equality. Hiromi’s experiences are separated into four different domains and each domain contained various areas of experiences, as displayed in Table 3 (see Table 3). Factors contributing to Hiromi’s experiences were summarized into five categories and they were: (1) gender role beliefs, (2) financial and cultural resources, (3) socio-cultural factors, (4) personal-psychological factors, and (5) husband’s attitudes. Table 4 (see Table 4) displays how each factor might have contributed to Hiromi’s experiences in each area as discussed in the following:

Category A: Gender Role Beliefs

Two factors are identified under this category: (1) influences from early socialization, and (2) new gender role awareness. Hiromi has acquired new gender role awareness at an early age and her gender role awareness appears to have a major influence on her experiences. However, the influences from her upbringing still have certain effects on her gender role practice. How these two factors might have affected Hiromi’s experiences is discussed in the following:

Factor A-1: Influences from early socialization. One of the influences of Hiromi’s upbringing was her parents’ gender role practice. Hiromi described her parents’ gender roles as: “My parents are very traditional, especially my father. I found him a very rigid and conservative guy – [a] patriarchal kind of person...My mother kind of accepts that and she is a homemaker.” Hiromi stated that her father had never involved himself in any housework and her mother had been doing everything at home. Another influence in Hiromi’s upbringing was the way she was raised as a girl. According to Hiromi, her parents demanded
her to do housework, but not her brothers. She said, “But my brothers were there - my brother did not have to do it.” Hiromi revealed that her mother also had discouraged her from pursuing a higher education. She said,

*My mother was pushing me to go to two year college instead of a four year university because she thought women did not have much career opportunity in Japan so going to university is kind of waste of money and time...My parents were thinking spending [money] on my brothers.*

Hiromi identified the influences from her early socialization to have affected her **gender role practice** in terms of her performance in household tasks. She described, “I do small cleaning on daily basis, like I clean the bathroom more when it’s dirty on the floor, when I notice it.” She attributed her behaviours to the impact of her upbringing, as stated in the following:

*Even if I oppose the way my parents are, they way they are functioning in their marriage, I am sure unconsciously [I have learned from them] because I was brought up in that society, in that family and structure. Maybe that’s how we learned, how we behave ourselves.*

*Even if I oppose ideologically in my head, my body moves without my [awareness]. What I say, what I believe and what I do aren’t always the same. This is what I learned from looking [at] other people. That’s what it is like.*

**Factor A-2: New gender role awareness.** Hiromi stated that her new gender role awareness began to occur at a young age. “I guess I kind of disagreed with my parents when I was at fifth grade.” Her new gender role awareness was reflected in the following:

*I didn’t like it when I grew up, looking my mother staying at home and taking care of kids and my father doesn’t do anything in the house.*

*I always resented those things my parents did...It’s OK to help mother, but my brother was there - my brother didn’t have to do it, just because they are boys.*

Hiromi’s new awareness seemed to have developed continuously. “I was always feeling that way throughout high school and also come parts of college.” Hiromi’s new
gender role awareness could also be observed in her frustration of the patriarchy in Japanese society. She said, "I had problems with the way Japanese society treating women." "Gender issue is the biggest reason I left Japan." After moving to North America, Hiromi appeared to have gained more gender role awareness through a cross-cultural perspective. As she stated,

*I don't think North America is completely gender equal or anything, but relatively speaking, if you compared with Japan, then it's much easier to be here as a woman.*

*Being non-Caucasian and being women put you in a secondary position from the beginning in the society. Marriage is within the society so you can't [separate them].*

Hiromi’s new gender role awareness appeared to have affected her **gender role expectations**, which was characterized with the desires of gender equality in her marriage and the liberation of her gender role. Her gender role expectations in the marriage were further displayed in the following statements:

*I can’t imagine myself marrying to a Japanese guy who is bossy. If I married to a Japanese guy, I would choose someone I can be equal, someone who would be seeing women more equal. Have a sense of what gender equality should be."

*I wouldn’t marry to somebody that I have to change and try to fit in, try to fit into the person’s needs. I wouldn’t do that...I don’t think it makes much difference if I married a Japanese guy except the language and communication issues because I wouldn’t choose somebody I can’t be myself or being equal."

*I thought it is easier to marry to a Canadian. I thought I would have an easier marriage with a Canadian guy...I don’t have to feel that- like certain roles, women role, role of wife, role of mother won’t be imposed on me."

Hiromi’s gender role expectations were also reflected on her perception of equality in her marriage. During the interview, Hiromi’s perception of equality in her marriage changed from “[the housework] is not equally divided. It’s not 50/50. It’s 70/30,” to “I guess objectively looking, there is the reality and the way I see it...The reality may be close to 50/50, but I don’t see it that way...I feel like [I am] doing more, [but] maybe I am not seeing what he is doing.” Hiromi following statements indicated that her gender role awareness had
brought her a higher level of gender role expectations:

*I mean it (her gender role awareness) did contribute to the equality but I never feel satisfied the way things work in the house, I always see it as gender issues so I might never be satisfied.*

*I think I am too critical because I am also doing this kind of gender and family things, so I think I see things more critical.*

*Because I have awareness on gender equality issues, I am aware of these issues, I think I am pickier than the average person.*

Although Hiromi did not express it explicitly, it seemed that her new gender role awareness also had affected her **gender role identity** and **gender role choice**. Her statement, “I wouldn’t create a family like that” about her parent’s gender roles suggested that Hiromi did not want to repeat her mother’s gender role. The impact of her new awareness on her gender role identity and choice was also reflected on her statement that a clerical job was “not what I want”, as well as her action to move to North America to pursue a higher education despite of her parents’ discouragement.

Hiromi’s new gender role awareness appeared to have affected her **gender role practice**. In terms of household chores, she stated, “We both do [the cleaning]. We kind of divide the cleaning places. We tried to divide equally.” “I never get up in the morning and cook breakfast.” “Some Japanese people can’t believe that I’ve never woken up and cooked breakfast as a woman.” Hiromi’s new gender role awareness also seemed to have affected her **gender role behaviours** that it made her more vigilant about the equal contribution between her and her husband and promoted her to negotiate for more equality with her husband, as she reported, “I tell him that this is unfair...this is not the way it’s supposed to be and let’s do something about it.”
Category B: Financial and Cultural Resources

This category consists of five factors: (1) employment, (2) financial resources and contributions, (3) social competence, (4) cultural advantage, and (5) language resources. The possible effects of these factors on Hiromi’s experiences are discussed in the following:

Factor B-1: Employment. Hiromi described that her career development had not been smooth. “I keep going back and forth [between Japan and North America]. My career isn’t straight forward.” Hiromi described her loss in her career potential:

*I would have more opportunities [in Japan]...because I have advanced my educational degree this far - Once you get to a certain barrier, and once you have achieved a certain level in the society, then I think it’s much easier to be women.*

*Job status is one thing I lost definitely. I feel my graduate school friends who went back to Japan and have all these professor jobs, which I envy them because I could have been a professor in Japan and I don’t know if I can be here.*

*For me [to be] here, I could teach something, like I could teach Japanese language maybe I could get a college teaching job...[but] maybe not at UBC, not in university.*

Hiromi’s employment status seemed to have affected her experiences in two different ways: On one hand, although Hiromi did not have a paid job, her student status had made her physically less available for certain housework and childrearing responsibility, which affected the *gender role practice* between her and her husband. On the other hand, the lack of paid employment had decreased Hiromi’s financial resources and contribution, which is discussed in the next section.

Factor B-2: Financial resources and contributions. Hiromi further identified how her foreign wife status had affected her financial resources and earning potential:

*If I did not marry him I might not have been here. I would have stayed in Japan and making all these money, who knows.*

*I am still a student. I don’t have any income at this point.*
Even if I get a job, I don’t think I would be earning as much as he does in the future

The lack of financial resources and contributions was found to have affected Hiromi’s *gender role practice*, as Hiromi identified herself:

*Although I am working - I am doing my study and he works - I am not paid so the housework isn’t equally divided.*

*I don’t feel like I have less power but put it this way – if I have more my own income than he does, maybe I will feel better than now. I do housework more than he does because I am not working, and I am not bringing money [home].*

*I feel like I can’t ask 50/50 because I am not making money. I am spending money.*

*The rationality is that he is the one who is bringing money and we depended on his income so that means he has to devote his work more so than I do. That’s how my rationality goes.*

The lack of financial resources and contributions also seemed to have affected Hiromi’s *financial autonomy* to a certain degree. Hiromi’s statement, “If I had my own income, I might spend differently” indicated that she had somehow self-restrained her financial autonomy.

**Factor B-3: Social competence.** The following statement suggested that Hiromi had perceived herself with a good level of social competence, which was mainly derived from her academic background. She said,

*I have the knowledge...Many [other Japanese women in interracial relationship] seem not to have language skills, cultural knowledge, knowledge of gender role, and how the society works, so there are lots of people who are in a bad relationship.*

Hiromi’s social competence appeared to have increased her *sense of personal power*, as she declared,

*I don’t buy [it]. I can see how these gender things...how social structure and system work to create the gender inequality. I can argue - that’s one thing, I can argue back because I study those things.*

*The knowledge and the language, I think that’s the two [factors] that helped gender*
equality.

Factor B-3: Cultural advantage. Hiromi identified the cultural advantage her husband had had affected her level of cultural adjustment. Hiromi perceived that Henry had more cultural advantage because of his ability to think logically, which was a resource in academics. Hiromi stated, “He had more power because his occupation required him to do logical thinking. He is good at that.” Since Hiromi was also in the same field, she felt that she was under more pressure to adapt to the Western thinking pattern. “The whole academics are Western,” she said.

Factor B-4 Language resources. Hiromi expressed the obstacles she experienced due to the language barriers in the following statements:

Even though I have been here for a long time, I still find it difficult to communicate in English sometime...when I try to express very complex thoughts.

The fact I have to communicate in English in everyday lives puts me to a secondary citizen status because English isn’t [my] native tongue.

Sometimes even I consider myself as an intelligent person, but sometimes because of my accent and the way I express myself, people don’t treat me with respect.

Hiromi identified language as the major obstacle that would hinder her career development. “I don’t think I can get a job here because of English and my major.”

I thought about moving back to Japan, but it’s more realistic. I did not really want to go, but it was more a realistic thing because as an immigrant, it would be more difficult to pursue academic job. It would be very difficult because of English...I was just assuming it would be very very difficult to get a job.

Hiromi’s English language limitations appeared to have affected the linguistic power between her and her husband. As Hiromi stated,

Sometimes I can’t express my thoughts logically, and he pointed out that’s irrational or not logical, and I am not sure it’s because of the language or because the way Asian people tend to think...I attribute that to my lack of language.
Anybody who speaks the first language in a relationship has more power... Of course language is a powerful tool. He has more power just because we communicate in English basically so he can explain whatever he wants to and he doesn’t have to struggle explaining himself.

Since English was still the dominate language in their communication, it also had predisposed Hiromi to make more linguistic adjustments.

Categories C: Socio-cultural Factors

Factors identified in this category included, (1) social context and (2) acculturation. How these factors might have contributed to Hiromi’s experiences was discussed in the following:

Factor C-1: Social context. Hiromi described the social context of Japan as, “[In Japanese society] as a woman, you have restrains and you have to behave in a certain way... to a feminine way.” She perceived the social context of North America as, “People are not as critical here about who you are,” and “It’s much looser here to be a female.”

Hiromi identified that the social context of North America to have brought her gender role liberation, which was also illustrated in her experiences both in Japan and North America.

Hiromi stated her gender role experiences in Japan:

Just because I am a woman, men in general did not treat me [with respect]. I guess I had to fight a lot to be recognized. I felt I had to work hard to prove myself more just because I am a woman.

After coming to North America, Hiromi’s had different experiences, as stated in the following:

One thing I like about North America was because I was treated more as a human being, rather than a woman who is supposed to be playing a secondary status.

I did not have to worry too much about what other people expected me what to behave and felt I was respected more.

I don’t feel like to be told what to do or how to behave as a woman as much as in
After I came back from America the first time, it was clear that “wow, it’s much better to be in North America as a woman.”

When I came to the States or North America, I felt been liberated from being a woman in the way that the society wants you to be. In other words, I was able to be myself more.

Factor C-2: Acculturation. The impact of acculturation on Hiromi’s gender role behaviours was reflected on how she dealt with gender equality issues. While she was still in Japan, she “just looked it as ‘Oh, well, that’s how things are.’... That’s how the way things are in Japan and I guess I didn’t protest when I was put down.” Hiromi believed that staying in North America had made her “more independent and assertive”, which was reflected on her original plan to go back to Japan. “I thought I could probably advocate and change the society,” Hiromi said. Hiromi’s assertiveness was also reflected in her initiation of negotiation when she perceived inequality.

Category D: Personal-Psychological Factors

Factors identified in this category include: (1) personality, (2) self-esteem, (3) attribution and interpretation, (4) financial interest, and (5) financial concern. Hiromi’s self-esteem, personality and her attribution and interpretation of events are interrelated and overlapped to a certain degree, although discussed separately.

Factor D-1: Personality. Hiromi identified “assertiveness and independence” as two of her personality traits that had affected the level of equality in her marriage. She described her personality as the following: “[In Japan], people think I am maybe a bit different.” “They always tell me, ‘you are too opinionated and too strong.’.” She stated that she had become even more assertive and independent after coming to North America.

Hiromi’s assertiveness was reflected in her gender role behaviours in terms of her
bargaining with her husband when perceiving inequality. Hiromi’s personality appeared to have increased Hiromi’s *sense of personal power*, which was reflected in her attitude in dealing with conflicts. She said, “I always fight back,” and “tolerance is not in my dictionary”. Hiromi acknowledged, “Personality had helped gender equality.”

**Factor D-2: Self-esteem.** Hiromi described herself to “have certain self-esteem - doesn’t have to be high but good amount of self-esteem.” Hiromi’s self-esteem was represented below:

I guess when you have a fight, you try to criticize other people – your partner. I will try to take the criticism but I also try not to lose my confidence... You can take other people’s criticism but still have self-esteem and just disregard the criticism part.

Hiromi also identified that the gender role liberation she experienced had increased her self-esteem. She stated, “I feel like I gained my self-esteem because people treated me the way I am.” “I don’t feel like to be told what to do or how to behave as a woman here as much as in Japan...I guess [I gained] a sense of self-esteem in a way [that] it’s OK to be me.”

It seemed that Hiromi’s self-esteem had contributed to her sense of *financial ownership*, which I believed to have also contributed to her *decision-making power*, as demonstrated in the following statements: “Just because I don’t bring money, that doesn’t necessarily mean that I am worthless or anything.”

Hiromi’s self-esteem also appeared to have brought her a *sense of personal power*. First, Hiromi’s self-esteem seemed to have promoted her self-acceptance of her language limitation. Despite of having experienced language barriers, Hiromi was confident in her language ability and perceived it as an asset. She said, “I have [the] language [to argue].” Second, Hiromi’s self-esteem seemed to have sustained her while arguing with her husband. She laughed and said, “Even when it’s not necessary to do so, I always automatically said,
‘No, I am not wrong.’

**Factor D-3: Attribution and Interpretation.** It appeared that Hiromi’s attribution of her career development had brought her a *sense of personal power*, which was reflected in the following statement:

*It's not because I feel guilty or “this is not my money, I shouldn't be spending.” It’s not how I think. I believe that my husband is what he is now because I kind of negotiated for his career that he is doing what he likes to do. We could have lived in Japan, so I could get a job.*

The above statement also presented a good level of self-esteem in Hiromi that it seemed to indicate that Hiromi’s self-esteem had contributed to her attribution.

**Factor D-4: Financial interests.** Hiromi identified her lack of financial interests as the main factor that affected her involvement in the *financial decision-making process*. She stated,

*I am not interested in managing money. That's not so much of power in relationship but I am just not interested.*

*I have power, certain power, but I am not really interested in using it. For example, when we were looking around [to buy a condo], he did all the looking, and kind of picked up what he liked. I let him exercise his power in purchasing this condo because I don't care.*

**Factor D-5: Financial concerns.** Although Hiromi had the access to their joint account and was feeling worthy of sharing her husband’s financial resources, she stated that she did not always feel comfortable spending money. It seemed that the financial concern, rather than personal power, was the main factor that led Hiromi to somehow limit her own *financial autonomy*. She said, “Because I can spend so much things but I don’t really need, like clothes, cosmetics...Because if I spend too much money, we won’t have too much saving.”

**Category E: Husband’s attitudes**
Factors under this category were (1) husband’s gender role attitudes, (2) husband’s financial attitudes, and (3) husband’s cultural attitudes.

**Factor E-1: Husband’s gender role attitudes.** Henry’s gender role attitudes were portrayed in Hiromi’s following statements:

*He wouldn’t say, “Well, I am bringing money so you should be doing more work - housework.” He has never said that.*

*My husband is brought up in a similar family that his Mom is a full time Mom, his Dad is bringing meat to the house. Maybe that’s how we learned, [and] how we behave ourselves.*

It appeared that Henry had respected and supported Hiromi gender role choice that it provided Hiromi **gender role autonomy**. Henry’s support of Hiromi’s gender role choice was reflected in his action to move to Japan for Hiromi to conduct her field work, as well as his action of taking a paternity leave and providing Hiromi the time to work on her PH.D degree.

Based on Hiromi’s description, Henry’s gender role attitudes appeared to have affected their **gender role practice** in a two different ways. On one hand, Henry’s gender role attitudes seemed to have brought flexibility in their gender role practice. Hiromi described, “It’s unthinkable for husbands to take paternity leave in Japan, like what my husband is doing now.” Henry’s paternity leave also freed Hiromi from a typical nursing mother’s role, as she said, “Because my husband stays here now that I can go out. I go to university and work, and I start having some friends.” Besides, “If I tell him he should be doing his housework more, he will do it.” On the other hand, as Hiromi described,

*It’s not like he doesn’t do any housework but it’s not 50/50...It’s 70/30.*

*He doesn’t [do small cleaning] unless it’s the cleaning day. He doesn’t see it.*

*He just leaves the kitchen [a] mess and then just goes to sleep.*
When I ask him to do housework, he always has all these reasons not to do right now, and I can’t persuade him.

Factor E-2: Husband’s financial attitudes. Hiromi’s statement, “It’s not like I have allowance or anything. I always get money from ATM whenever I want to” described the financial resource distribution between her and her husband, and this also suggested that she had gained financial autonomy because of Henry’s financial attitudes.

In terms of financial decision-making, Hiromi described Henry’s attitudes in the following statements: “70% of decisions will be made by my husband.” “It will never be like one day he goes out and buys something. No, that doesn’t happen.” These two statements indicated that although Henry had been the main decision maker in the marriage, he had involved Hiromi in the decision-making process, which appeared to have given Hiromi certain decision-making power. As Hiromi stated, “I did contribute [opinions], so we did talk things, did negotiate and compromise.” I have power, certain power, but I am not really interested in using it.”

Factor E-3: Husband’s cultural attitudes. Hiromi described Henry’s cultural attitudes as:

My husband lived in Japan for five years total, and he studies about Japanese culture and people

We don’t really have languages issues in our marriage because he also learns Japanese and he speaks Japanese and he learned it as an adult.

He knows how it’s like to be a second language speaker.

It appeared that Henry’s cultural attitudes had increased his effort in making cultural adjustments and linguistic adjustments, which made the Japanese language a strong resource for Hiromi and provided her more linguistic power in the marriage. As Hiromi stated, “I will
correct his Japanese sometimes. It’s like it goes both ways. So in terms of self-esteem in
language issues in marriage, we don’t have problems.”

Yet, it appeared that Henry’s cultural sensitivity did not always translate into actions,
as Hiromi said,

_He studies these things. He knows how Asian people think - it’s circular, not linear
[or] logically like Western people. But still when it comes to reality, in a
relationship, for instance, he kind of criticizes me for not being logical, and not
explaining enough._

_He always demands logical, rational reasoning in every single conversation... he is
not doing it on purpose. It’s like his is not aware that he is doing it._

_When I start to do all these circular reasoning, he doesn’t seem to have much
patience...He won’t listen to me unless it’s logical, almost._

_I can’t explain things logically or the way he wants and just because I can’t logically
explain doesn’t mean it’s not true but he doesn’t buy it._

As a result, Henry’s demand of logical thinking of Hiromi had seemed to have put her
under the pressure to make more _cultural adjustments_, as Hiromi said that she felt Henry
was asking her “to be like him or a Western way.” Henry’s attitudes also seemed to have
affected Hiromi’s _sense of personal power_, which was reflected in her statement that “I feel
frustrated,” and “I think I can say that he had more power because his occupation required
him to do logical thinking. He is good at that.”

**Summary**

In the gender role domain, Hiromi’s new gender role awareness seemed to have
dominated her experiences that it affected her gender role identity, choice and expectations.
Hiromi’s gender role practice appeared to be influenced by the combination of her early
socialization, her gender role awareness, employment, financial resources and contributions,
and Henry’s gender role attitudes. On one hand, her new gender role awareness prompted
her to ensure an equal division of housework, but on the other hand the influences from her upbringing and the lack of financial resources and contributions drove her to do more housework. The combination of her new gender role awareness, personality and self-esteem, as well as the acculturation process she went through made her more vigilant and assertive in negotiating for a higher level of gender equality in her marriage. The social context of North American brought Hiromi certain gender role liberation, while Henry's gender role attitudes seemed to have provided her gender role autonomy.

In the finances and decision-making domain, Hiromi's self-esteem and how she attributed Henry's career achievement to her own sacrifice of her career opportunities brought her a sense of financial ownership over Henry's financial resources. Yet, although Henry had provided her his financial resources and certain financial autonomy, the lack of financial resources and contributions appeared to have led Hiromi to set some limits on her financial autonomy. Although Henry also had given Hiromi certain financial decision-making power, her lack of financial interest decreased her involvement in the decision-making process.

In the culture and language domain, Hiromi's linguistic adjustments and linguistic power appeared to be affected by her language resources and Henry's cultural attitudes. English being the main language in the marriage, Hiromi was predisposed to make more linguistic adjustments, and also experienced decreased linguistic power while communicating in English. However, Henry's ability to speak Japanese made the Japanese language a powerful resource for Hiromi and also helped her regain some linguistic power. Henry's cultural demand for Hiromi to engage in logical thinking pressured her to make more cultural adjustments.
In the personal power domain, Hiromi’s sense of personal power appeared to be affected by various factors. Henry’s cultural demand on her somehow seemed to have decreased her sense of personal power. However, Hiromi’s social competence, especially her academic background, provided her the knowledge in gender equality issues; her self-esteem helped her regain confidence in her language ability; her attribution and interpretation styles brought her a sense of financial ownership; her personality and self-esteem contributed to her assertiveness. Together, they seemed to have given Hiromi a sense of personal power.
Miki's Case

Description of the Couple

Miki was a 32 year old Japanese woman who had resided in Canada for two and one half years. She had graduated from a junior college in Japan and had worked in the tourism industry for ten years. Miki’s husband Mark, a Canadian born Caucasian man, was eight years her senior. Mark had completed high school and did not have a steady job. At the time of the interview, Miki had left Mark and had a restraining order against him. Miki and her eight-month-old daughter were living in a woman’s shelter and were supported by government assistance.

The Story

Miki remembers the beatings. Every time her dad beat her mom, the story always ended the same way. They would go to grandma’s home. Soon Dad would arrive. He would apologize and promise that it would never happen again. Mom would pack and return home with him. Things went fine for a while — until the next time he got drunk and beat her again. Miki could not recall how many times this had happened. When she was old enough, she asked Mom, “Why don’t you divorce him?” Mom replied, “Patience. Women have to be patient.”

Despite these experiences, Miki hoped that one day she would get married and have children and could quit her job and become a full-time housewife. She wanted to be a good wife and take care of everything at home so her husband could focus on his career — just like her mother. Despite working outside of the home, Miki’s mother did all the housework and her father never did any. Miki saw that through her entire childhood and thought that’s what it meant to be a good woman.

Miki went to a junior college. After graduation, she worked in the tourism industry.
Her job provided her the opportunities to travel around the world. She loved to see and experience different cultures. Sometimes she dreamed about moving to a foreign country and creating a new life. The Western life style presented in the Hollywood movies appealed to her – white people with blond hair and they all spoke English. Miki loved the sound of English. She said, “It sounded like music.” It would be so cool if she could speak fluent English or marry a Caucasian man and have a mixed-blood baby, she thought. Miki was 29 and still lived with her parents when she decided to come to Canada. She thought that it was time for her to be more independent and to expand her life experiences. She applied for a working holiday visa and started her journey toward a new life in a foreign country. Before she left Japan, her mother told her that it would be all right if she met and dated a Caucasian man, but “she told me, ‘Please do not do black guys. Black guys are scary.’.”

Miki had been to Canada before, but was unimpressed. She thought that Vancouver was not so much different from Japan because so many Japanese people lived there, especially in the downtown area. However, because of how the working holiday visa system worked, she did not have many choices. After arriving in Canada, Miki found herself a female Canadian roommate because she figured it would be the best way to learn English. She also tried to find an ESL school that did not have too many Japanese students and was not too expensive.

She heard about the free ESL tutoring at the Carnegie centre. The first time she passed by it, she was shocked and frightened by the rough neighborhood. She decided to take the tutoring there anyway. Next, she hoped to find a job. Miki found a job waitressing, but she hesitated to take it. “Maybe I had a bit pride. I was working at traveling agency for ten years.” She told herself that taking the job would give her a different life experience and
the opportunity to practice English. It was not an easy job. Not only did she become exhausted physically, she also had to put up with customer insults. She later found out that her boss had stolen staff tips. The chef got angry and quit, but Miki told herself that she received free meals and she could tolerate such a mindless job.

Other than working, Miki spent her time attempting to find more female Canadian friends with whom she could practice her English. She was wary about Canadian men because she had heard that some of them would target Japanese girls and exploit them for money and sex. When Miki and her best friend — another Japanese girl — visited pubs or night clubs, they would socialize or even accept drinks from Canadian men, but they always went straight home afterwards.

Gradually Miki and her friend grew bored with the bar scene. They began to complain to one another about Canada. “They are very stupid and they don’t have any culture... America has power but Canada doesn’t have [power]. We said Canada is kind of colony for [the] States... At that time, we really hated Canada... Maybe we missed Japan... After WWII, Japanese people are very smart. Even we couldn’t train [the military], but we are getting higher, getting ahead, and now we have big companies like Sony or Canon, and vehicle companies, [like] Nisan or Honda.” Miki began to realize that Canadians could speak English only because it was their mother tongue and she felt that this was nothing to envy.

Disappointed in Canada, Miki missed Japan terribly. Meanwhile, she grew depressed over a potential relationship that did not work out. Heart broken, Miki dug out a telephone number from her garbage can and phoned Mark, whom Miki had just met. Mark was a volunteer in an English exchange program at a church when Miki met him. Miki really had
no interest in Mark, but she needed someone with whom to talk. Gradually, Miki and Mark grew closer. Gradually Miki recovered from her depression and fell in love with Mark.

One evening, while walking Miki home, Mark pointed to the people at a dark corner and told her that they were drug dealers. Miki wondered how Mark knew this and asked him whether he had ever used drugs or gone to jail. Mark grew silent. His attitude shocked Miki. She never associated him with any drugs or crimes because he had such a gentle temperament and people often thought he held a job with high status. Miki became angry and walked home by herself. The next day, Mark called her and begged her for forgiveness. He told her that he had stopped using drugs and he asked her not to judge him by his past. Miki forgave him and their relationship progressed. Miki began to consider the possibility of marriage with Mark, but she hesitated because he did not have a steady job. Finally, Miki decided to give their relationship a try and they moved in together four months after they met. Miki phoned her mother with whom she had a close relationship to discuss her decision. Miki’s mother flew to Vancouver to meet Mark and she seemed impressed and pleased with Miki’s choice.

They had lived together five months and everything seemed to be going well until one day, the police knock on their door. They asked for Mark and arrested him. Miki cried and begged the police to tell her what had happened. They would tell her nothing. Miki watched as they handcuffed Mark and took him away in a police car. She did not know what to do. A couple of days later, they released Mark. Miki learned that Mark was accused of making a threatening call to his ex-girlfriend’s sister who had a restraining order against him. Mark denied the accusation and asked Miki to be his witness and to testify that he had not used the phone that day. Miki believed Mark, but she also found out that he had ten criminal records
for drugs possession and theft.

One week after the arrest, Mark came home from work and told Miki that he had injured himself in a bike accident and had gone to see his family doctor. He told her that the accident resulted in some brain damage. He handed her a stack of paper filled with information on brain injury.

Miki grew more concerned about their relationship. Mark’s criminal record, his arrests, his brain damage, his drinking and financial difficulties all bothered her. She decided to return to Japan and give herself some time and space to think about this relationship. Mark became upset and tried to convince her to stay with him. Before she left for Japan, Miki found out that she was pregnant. Mark seemed thrilled, but Miki contemplated an abortion. “But when I think about abortion, he makes me feel guilty,” she said. Eventually Miki decided to keep the baby and marry Mark. They made all the arrangements as quickly as possible so Miki could obtain her landed immigrant status and receive medical care.

After they got married, Miki quit her job and became a full-time housewife. Mark found a construction job and a second job delivering pizza. Miki grew happy because she saw that Mark was doing his best to support her. Financially they were getting ahead and began to accumulate some savings. However, not long after the baby was born, Mark lost his construction job and money grew tight. Sometimes Miki dipped into her own saving to support the family. After the baby was born, Miki wanted to take the baby home to visit her family in Japan, but Mark did not want them to leave without him. Miki argued that she would use her own savings for the trip and she eventually convinced Mark.

Before Miki left for Japan, she had saved one thousand dollars to pay her immigration fee. Despite Miki’s objections, Mark used the money to buy a large flat screen television. He
promised that he would return the money to Miki. While in Japan, Miki received a phone call from Mark. He told her that he had saved one thousand dollars to pay her back, but lost his wallet. The money was gone. Miki’s friends in Japan told her they found this story suspicious. Miki wondered if Mark had used the money for drugs. After returning to Vancouver, Mark told Miki that he had lost their wedding ring at work. Miki was upset, but felt that there was nothing she could do. Soon she noticed that things seemed somehow different from before. Mark’s behaviour seemed quite strange at times as well.

One evening, Mark refused dinner and said he wanted to go out to have some time alone. Mark had never acted like this before and Miki found his behaviour strange. Mark did not return home until 11pm that evening. He told Miki that the police stopped his car and impounded it. He needed money to recover the car. Miki was suspicious. Mark told her that she could go with him if she did not believe him, but she could not leave since she had to stay home and take care of the baby. Mark took the bank card. Miki gave him some quarters so he would have the money to call her. Mark never called, nor did he return home that night. Miki worried about what had happened and could not sleep. She thought something terrible must have happened to Mark. She waited and waited. When daybreak came, Miki grabbed the baby and hurried to the bus stop. She took the first bus to where the police supposedly had impounded Mark’s car. She found no sign of Mark or the car. Miki asked the attendants at a nearby gas station but no one had seen Mark. Miki returned home and asked the landlord for help. They called the police, but were told to wait for 24 hours. They called every hospital in the city and still could not find Mark. Miki called the police again and explained the situation. Through her persistence, the police finally accepted her missing person report. Two hours later, RCMP informed her that they had found her husband at UBC
Miki rushed to the hospital and found Mark in the psychiatric emergency ward. He gave her a vacant stare and looked like a different person. He was barely coherent, and mumbled something incomprehensible. The nurses would not tell Miki what happened, noting Mark’s right to privacy. Mark finally recognized Miki and their baby. He told her that he loved her and did not want to lose her. She wanted to hug him, but was not allowed. Mark’s condition improved by the next day. The first thing he asked Miki was to make him some rice balls. She could not believe her ears. For two days, she could not sleep or eat and Mark only seemed to care about his needs. “He never cares about me!” she said. Mark would not tell Miki what happened to him, but his mother said that he must have taken drugs. She told Miki that Mark had a history of drug abuse.

Miki’s heart sank. Her worse fear had been realized. Mark had relapsed. Miki became afraid that he would never overcome his drug addiction, and would continue to relapse no matter how many times he tried to quit. Miki believed that drug addicts had a weak personality and did not have the will power to control their habits. She related the case of an intermarried Japanese woman who had abandoned her children because of family drug problems. Miki did not want her or her daughter’s lives affected by her husband’s drug problems. Without a word, Miki packed and left home with her baby while Mark remained in the hospital. Miki asked for help from a friend’s fiancée who worked for the ministry of children and family. He helped Miki find a women’s shelter. She thought about returning to Japan, but feared the judgment of the society. She did not want people to feel sorry for her, “I am not miserable,” she said. She also knew that it would be much more difficult to be a single mother in Japan than in Canada. She decided to remain here and take legal actions to
obtain her child’s custody.

After his release from the hospital, Mark began to search for Miki. They did not see each other until they appeared in court. Mark swore to change and asked Miki to give him another chance. The court granted Mark supervised visitation of their baby twice a week. During visitation, Mark always gave Miki letters that he wrote to win her back. In one of his letters, Mark told Miki how much he missed her cooking and how she was such a good wife. Miki shook her head and said, “He did not miss me. He only missed what I did for him.” In another letter, Mark told Miki that he had been attending a twelve step program. Miki did not understand what he meant. Mark promised that he would take drug tests to prove that he was clean. Miki called addiction services about the drug tests and was told that cocaine could be flushed from the body within two days. In other words, the tests were meaningless. After obtaining all the information, Miki felt that she could no longer trust Mark.

Before she left Mark, Miki did most of the housework and childrearing tasks while Mark worked outside of the home. Miki kept track of bills, doctors’ appointments and even designed Mark’s resume for him. Before she left for Japan, Miki made 300 dumplings and cabbage rolls so Mark would not have to worry about cooking. On a typical day, when Mark worked, he would cook breakfast for both of them and leave Miki to take care of the baby throughout the day, do grocery shopping and prepare dinner before Mark returned home. After supper, Miki would wash the dishes while Mark sat down and read the bible. Sometimes Mark would watch the baby, but sometimes he would tell Miki to leave the baby in the crib because he was tired. Usually Mark went to bed by 8:00 pm leaving Miki to finish the clean-up, bathe the baby and shower. Miki remembered that in the beginning of their relationship, Mark did some housework but gradually he did less and less and she did more
and more. “Maybe he thinks I am his mom, his house maker,” she said. On weekends, they always went to church. Mark, a Protestant Christian, wanted Miki to convert to his religion.

Miki felt that she and Mark had different attitudes toward money. In Miki’s eyes, Mark liked to spend money and he encouraged Miki to spend as well. However, Miki did not feel comfortable with his spending habits, because “Japanese do not spend money when no savings, unlike Canadians. They like to spend money.” Miki tried to save money for the family and she watched every penny she spent. She felt guilt for spending Mark’s money and used her savings when she needed to spend money on herself. Miki stated that to save money, she often would sacrifice her needs and wants. For example, she liked vegetarian pizzas, but always ordered what Mark wanted so they did not have to spend money on two pizzas. When they argued about money or other decisions, Mark always told Miki, “I am [the one] working.” Miki believed that Mark did deserve more consideration, because he did bring home the money. Sometimes Miki felt too tired to argue with him in English. She also needed to conserve energy so she could take care of the baby. Miki noted that most of time Mark could convince her and get what he wanted. For instance, Mark insisted on signing up for a martial art class that cost 100 dollars a month even though money was tight. Miki further noted that when Mark could not convince her, he would withdraw money from their joint account. She felt there was nothing she could do. Even though Mark gave her his paychecks, Miki felt she still did not have control over his spending.

After leaving Mark, Miki began thinking about their marriage and developed a different view of Mark and their marriage. She perceived Mark as “a good actor” who held their baby in the church in an attempt to create an image of being a “good husband”. She said that she now realized what Mark meant when he told his friends that Canadian women
were no good, unlike Japanese women who would take care of him. “Now I know,” she said. Miki had believed that they were equal partners in the marriage, but now she said, “I think I spoiled him too much.” She wanted a different kind of relationship. Ideally, she would like to work part-time so she could still spend time with her child. She wanted a mate who would help with the housework. She would no longer tolerate drug or alcohol abuse, or smoking. She no longer wanted to compromise or sacrifice her needs. She wished to speak her mind and do what she wished to do. She now would say, “I really want to eat the veggie [pizza].”
Table 5: Domains and Areas of Experiences in Miki’s Case

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Area of Experiences</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Gender Role</td>
<td>1-1. Gender role expectations</td>
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<td>1-2. Gender role identity</td>
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<td>1-3. Gender role choice</td>
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<td>1-4. Gender role autonomy</td>
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<td>1-5. Gender role practice</td>
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<td>1-6. Gender role behaviours</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1-7. Gender role liberation</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Finances and Decision-making</td>
<td>2-1. Financial ownership</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2-2. Financial autonomy</td>
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<td>2-3. Financial resource distribution</td>
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<td>2-4. Decision-making power</td>
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<td>2-5. Decision-making process</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2-6. Financial Decision-making power</td>
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<td>3. Culture and Language</td>
<td>3-1. Culture adjustment</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3-2. Linguistic adjustment</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3-3. Linguistic power</td>
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<td>4. Personal Power</td>
<td>4-1. Sense of personal power</td>
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</tbody>
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Note: This table reflects the first step of analysis, which summarizes the participant’s specific area of experiences (right column). These experiences are grouped into four domains (left column).
# Table 6: Categories and Factors Contributing to Miki's Experiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Area of Experiences</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Gender Role Beliefs</td>
<td>A-1. Influences from early socialization</td>
<td>Gender role expectations</td>
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<td>Gender role identity</td>
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<td>Gender role choice</td>
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<td>Gender role behaviours</td>
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<td>A-2. New gender role awareness</td>
<td>Gender role expectations</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Gender role identity</td>
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<tr>
<td>B. Financial and Cultural Resources</td>
<td>B-1. Employment</td>
<td>Gender role practice</td>
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<td></td>
<td>B-2. Financial resources and contributions</td>
<td>Financial ownership</td>
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<td>Financial autonomy</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Financial decision-making power</td>
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<td></td>
<td>B-3. Social competency</td>
<td>Sense of personal power</td>
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<td></td>
<td>B-4. Language resources</td>
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<td>Linguistic power</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Linguistic adjustment</td>
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<tr>
<td>C. Socio-Cultural Factors</td>
<td>C-1. Social context</td>
<td>Gender role liberation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>C-2. Acculturation</td>
<td>Gender role expectations</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Gender role behaviours</td>
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<tr>
<td>D. Personal-Psychological Factors</td>
<td>D-1. Cultural identity</td>
<td>Sense of personal power</td>
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<td></td>
<td>D-2. Personality</td>
<td>Gender role practice</td>
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<td>Decision-making process</td>
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<td>Sense of personal power</td>
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<td></td>
<td>D-3. Attribution and Interpretation</td>
<td>Sense of personal power</td>
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<td>D-4. Financial concerns</td>
<td>Financial autonomy</td>
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<tr>
<td>E. Husband’s Attitudes</td>
<td>E-1. Husband’s gender role attitudes</td>
<td>Gender role choice</td>
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<td>Gender role autonomy</td>
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<td>Gender role practice</td>
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<td>E-2. Husband’s financial attitudes</td>
<td>Financial autonomy</td>
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<td>Financial resource distribution</td>
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<td>Financial decision-making power</td>
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<td>E-3. Husband’s cultural attitudes</td>
<td>Cultural adjustment</td>
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<td>Linguistic adjustment</td>
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<td>E-4. Husband’s conflict resolution attitudes</td>
<td>Decision-making power</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Sense of personal power</td>
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<td>E-5. Husband’s emotional connections</td>
<td>Sense of personal power</td>
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Note: This table reflects the second step of analysis, which illustrates how a particular contributing factor (the second column) might have affected the participant’s specific areas of experiences (the third column), as identified in the previous table. The contributing factors are grouped into five categories (the first column).
Analysis

This section identifies factors that might have affected Miki’s experiences related to gender equality issues. Miki’s experiences are separated into four different domains. Each domain contains various areas of experiences, as displayed in Table 5 (see Table 5). Factors affecting Miki’s experiences are summarized into five categories: (1) gender role beliefs, (2) financial and cultural resources, (3) socio-cultural factors, (4) personal-psychological factors, and (5) husband’s attitudes. Table 6 (see Table 6) displays how each factor might have contributed to Miki’s experiences in each area as discussed in the following:

Categories A: Gender Role Beliefs

The two factors identified in this category include: (1) influences from early socialization, and (2) new gender role awareness. Miki’s new gender role awareness occurred after she left her husband. Her experiences in the marriage appeared to be mainly dominated by the influences to which she was exposed in her early socialization.

Factor A-1: Influences from Early Socialization. A few influences identified in Miki’s early socialization process seemed to have impacted her gender role ideology and identity: (1) the gender role ideology prominent in Japanese society. As Miki stated, “In Japan we have culture, patience, especially marriage. Marriage needs patience.” (2) her parents’ gender role practice. Miki noted, “My mom is not just a housewife, but even she is working, she did [all the housework].” (3) her parents’ power dynamic. As Miki stated, “My father beat my mother. It was really bad.” (4) her mother’s gender role expectations of her. Miki said, “My mom always said, ‘Patient. Women have to be patient.’.” “Mom said that women had to be patient.” In sum, Miki believed that women should treat men with “more respect”, and put their husband’s needs before their own.
Influences from Miki’s early socialization seemed to have affected her *gender role* expectations. Miki stated that before she got married, she “never thought about equality”. All she expected from her husband was for him to be the provider. “As long as he brings money home, it’s OK.” The following statements reflect Miki’s gender role expectations of her husband: “Maybe he is working hard so even he does not do housework, I am not complaining.” “Even a Japanese husband is drinking alcohol everyday, I am not complaining...even smoking. It’s usual, right?”

Influences from Miki’s upbringing also appeared to have affected her *gender role* identity and gender role choice. She saw her role as a housewife and mother. This identity led her to quit her job after she became pregnant. These influences also seemed to have affected Miki’s gender role practice. The following statement suggests Miki’s gender role practice: “I want him working the same job, so I always try to do my best as much as I can. He just wanted to concentrate on the job so I do the cooking, anything - doctor’s appointment, making [his] resume.” Miki’s gender role practice was also illustrated in the following examples: “Before I leave Vancouver to go to Japan, I made 300 dumplings and tempura and cabbage roles to [be] frozen, so he did not need to worry about cooking - because he eats a lot. He can not do [it] so I always do it for him.” Miki’s next statement linked the influences from her early socialization and gender role practice: “I don’t know it’s my personality or my culture that the wife does everything, and the husband works.”

Influences from Miki’s early socialization seemed to have shaped Miki’s *gender role* behaviours. Miki gave the following example: “He said, ‘I want to eat that meat pizza.’ I prefer the veggie...[but] he wants to eat meat so I said, ‘OK, meat is fine.’.” Miki’s following statements reflects the gender role beliefs she acquired from her early
socialization: “If I am [still] a girlfriend [rather than a wife], I can say my opinions.” “Mom was always patient...I think it made me patient. Even it’s not good, patient...That’s why.”

Factor A-2: New gender role awareness. After leaving her husband, Miki experienced some changes in her gender role beliefs, which she claimed she learned from her “experiences”. She said, “[I was] kind of traditional. I am changed.” The following reflects Miki’s new gender role awareness: When asked whether she still believed that she needed to pay more respect to men, she said “No!” She further stated, “He always says, ‘I like Japanese women. They really take care of me.’ Now I know why he said that.”

Miki’s new gender role awareness appeared to have changed her gender role expectations, as reflected in her descriptions of her current ideal mate: “Even I get marriage with [a] Japanese guy I prefer him to help me [with housework] and I don’t like smoking. Alcohol sometimes is OK. Special occasion is OK.” “Even he [is] working late, [as long as] he helps the household, it’s OK.

Miki’s new gained gender role awareness also seemed to have changed her gender role identity. She said, “Before I thought [I wanted to be a full-time housewife], but now I don’t want...I prefer to work, like part time because I want to spend time with the baby...It’s good for me, actually.”

Category B: Financial and Cultural Resources

This category includes four factors: (1) employment, (2) financial resources and contributions, (3) social competence, and (4) language resources.

Factor B-1: Employment. After coming to Canada, Miki began working as a waitress in a Japanese restaurant. She quit her job voluntarily after becoming pregnant. Miki’s employment status appeared to have affected her gender role practice in that she became a
full-time housewife responsible for most of the housework and childrearing tasks. Miki’s employment status also seemed to have affected her financial resources and contributions — discussed in the next section.

Factor B-2: Financial resources and contributions. Miki reported that Mark was the main financial provider in the marriage. However, due to his employment instability, Miki at times had to use her own savings to support the family. Miki’s financial resources and contributions appeared to have affected her sense of financial ownership and financial autonomy in two ways. On one hand, having her own bank account and savings, as well as a certain amount of financial contributions seemed to have provided her a sense of financial ownership over her own money, and a certain degree of financial autonomy. On the other hand, not having a steady income and regular financial contributions seemed to have negatively affected her sense of financial ownership over her husband’s financial resources. This seemed to have further led her to limit her financial autonomy in spending his money, as Miki stated, “If I wanted to do something, I withdraw from my account.” “Maybe it makes me feel guilty if I spend his money.” Her comments that she “kind of” felt that she should not spend too much money because she was a housewife who was not making money further reflected Miki’s self-limiting financial autonomy.

Miki’s financial resources and contributions also seemed to have affected her financial decision-making power in two ways. “But after all, I said, ‘OK’, because he is working”, she said, indicating that the lack of steady financial contributions led her to compromise more during their decision-making process. At the same time, having her own savings seemed to bring Miki more financial decision-making power, as illustrated in the following statement:
I decided I wanted to [go] back to Japan for showing the baby to my Daddy and he was upset. I said, 'I want to [go] back to Japan for one month', and he doesn't want [me to]. But after all he agreed and I decided I would [go] back to Japan because I [would] pay by myself to buy the ticket. Why I can not? I argued and he agreed.

Factor B-3: Social competence. Miki's social competence was reflected in many areas. First, she independently found herself a free ESL school and a job. Second, she found resources to locate her husband when he was missing. Third, she used her network to move herself and her child into a safe shelter and to seek legal help. The following statement illustrated her social competence in dealing with her marital crisis: “I should get the custody and I should do legal things... And I decided to take the time so I should move to transitional house so I can get more information... and I had a legal aid lawyer.” Fourth, she found the necessary drug information when her husband promised to take a drug test: “I phoned drug and alcohol - somewhere about drug addiction and I asked them if he is not taking the drugs for 1 year, they can prove? They say if he is not taking the drug for two days, it's clean.”

Miki’s social competency appeared to have brought her a sense of personal power, reflected in her bargaining power with her husband after she left him. Miki’s bargaining power could be seen from her husband’s compromising promise to seek treatment for his addiction and to turn over to her all his paychecks and financial power.

Factor B-4: Language resources. Miki’s English language resources appeared to have affected her linguistic adjustments and decision-making power to a certain degree. She stated that when they had different opinions on decisions, “he really tried to [convince] me. He could discuss, and I can’t speak English very well.” “Sometimes [when] I really want to do that, I really argue, discuss... but usually very tired, especially [in] English.” Miki said that she often “gives up” during arguments. It also seemed that the language barriers Miki encountered affected her linguistic power, reflected in her linguistic dependence on her
husband. Miki mentioned that she often could not understand important documents or what happened in their life and she needed to rely on Mark for explanations. She said, “But if I know about language more, I can read the criminal record more exactly, and if he explains something, I understand more...sometimes I didn’t understand like Peace Bond.”

Category C: Socio-cultural Factors

(1) Social context and (2) acculturation are two factors identified in this category.

Factor C-1: Social context. It appeared that the Canadian social context brought Miki a certain degree of gender role liberation. Miki’s stated that she had gained “more freedom” in Canada. “[In Japan], I have to care [about] how I wear the dress. I should [do] make up. I should care more [about] looks. [In Canada], I don’t need to [do] make up. [If] I want to [do] make up, I can do [that], but I don’t need [to].”

Factor C-2: Acculturation. It seemed that the acculturation process somehow changed Miki’s gender role behaviours in term of her assertiveness. The following statement reflects how Miki’s acculturation affected her gender role behaviours:

[In Canada] if I didn’t speak...if I didn’t complain, they don’t help. I have to speak. In Japan even we didn’t speak, “Oh, do you need help?” But here I have to speak out.

I want to say, “I want to eat the veggie [pizza].”

I didn’t want to argue small things, but now maybe I should say I want to do that...Canadian women that, right?

Category D: Personal-Psychological Factors

Factors under this category include, (1) cultural identity, (2) personality, (3) attribution and interpretation, and (4) financial concerns.

Factor D-1: Cultural identity. Miki’s cultural identity appeared to have gone through different stages of development, as illustrated in the following: Initially, as Miki stated, she
was “westernized” while she was still in Japan. She stated,

> Western people are kind of cool...people are white, blond hair, speak English, kind of music...sounds very nice. And we always watched Western, Hollywood movie, and it’s cool if somebody...people who can speak English. It’s cool.

> When we live in Japan, interracial marriage is cool, and husband is, “Oh, white!” We have influence from States, I think. White is number one.

After staying in Canada for a while, Miki’s cultural identity seemed to have entered a different stage of development. The following comment reflects her attitude toward the Canadian host culture:

> We complained. We started complaining about Canada and Canadian. They are very stupid and they don’t have any culture...At that time we really hated Canada...Maybe we missed Japan. That’s why, and we were talking about Japanese culture. And after WWII, Japanese people are very smart. Even we couldn’t train, but we are getting higher, getting ahead and now we have big companies like Sony or Canon, and vehicle companies Nisan or Honda...But at the time, we said that hey just speak English, they can not speak another language.

Gradually, Miki’s cultural identity moved to a new stage, reflected in her statement,

> “Some parts are very nice. I agree [with] their Canadian culture, like Canadian life style.”

> “Asian culture is too close...Some with Canadian...some with Japanese, so [the combination of] Canada style and Japanese style are better.”

It seemed that Miki had integrated both Japanese and Canadian culture; she had begun to construct a new cultural identity characterized by the acceptance of both Japanese and Canadian culture. Miki’s coming to terms with her cultural identity seemed to have promoted her self-acceptance of her linguistic limitations:

> Before I cared I had a Japanese accent. I wanted to speak more like Canadian, but right now I don’t care...I give up because I am Japanese. I was born in Japan. Maybe I was proud of Japanese now. Before I was not.

Miki’s self-acceptance of her language limitations might not have increased her actual linguistic power but probably increased her sense of personal power in the linguistic
area. This may have made her less threatened by her husband's ascribed linguistic power and decreased the potential linguistic conflicts between them.

Factor D-2: Personality. Miki described herself as "patient," and she displayed this trait in her tolerance of the harsh working conditions and unfair treatment she received in the restaurant where she worked. Instead of asserting her rights, Miki told herself, “Owner is stingy but I can eat the sushi after work and just two hours or three hours a day.” Miki also displayed her patience in her tolerance of her husband's drinking despite her dislike of this behaviour. She also forgave her husband for his past drug use and his many arrests. Miki also exhibited care-taking behaviour as exemplified in the following statements: “He is very weak so he needs to be [taken care of].” “The guy phoned us and I protected my husband and I told him, ‘I can help. What do you want?’”

The combination of Miki’s patience and care-taking traits appeared to have affected her gender role practice. “I don’t know [it’s] my character or culture - women do everything,” she said. Miki’s tolerance also appeared to have affected her gender role practice as reflected in the following response to her husbands’ refusal to help with household and childrearing tasks: “Oh, OK. I [will] do that.” Her preparation of extra food for her husband while she was going away, as well as doing his resume for him reflected how her care-taking trait influenced her gender role practice.

Miki’s also identified her personality as a factor that affected her attitude in the decision-making process between her and her husband. She stated that she did not like to get into arguments with her husband about making decisions. She said that if she really insisted, she could influence the outcome of their decision, but most of the time, “[I] give up. It’s very small thing...also like my character.”
Factor D-3: Attribution and Interpretation. Miki’s attribution and interpretation of her experiences reflected her resiliency. She perceived her change of job status as “not loss - that’s just change,” and “here there are people graduated from UBC and they working the moving job, sometimes taxi driver, so that’s OK.” She interpretation her experiences in this marriage as, “I gain experiences, even bad,” and “People think of me, ‘oh, she is a very sorry person. She is miserable.’ I am not miserable...I just had a bad time.” Miki’s attribution and interpretation styles exhibited strength and self-acceptance, which ultimately seemed to have generated a sense of personal power for her.

Factor D-4: Financial concerns. It appeared that the main factor that limited Miki’s financial autonomy was her financial concerns, which was also based on their actual financial difficulties. The following statements reflect these concerns:

[When] I was pregnant, I just have one [pair of] pants, and I really try to save...because he can’t make good money.

He doesn’t have too much money. That’s why. It’s a problem...We don’t have enough money. If I spend...that’s why.

But I can’t spend too much money, means I can’t go out, even take a bus for two dollars and back here two dollars. So I am really worried about the financial...I usually spend the money...ten bucks for one month for calling card.

Category E: Husband’s attitudes

Factors under this category include, (1) husband’s gender role attitudes, (2) husband’s financial attitudes, and (3) husband’s cultural attitudes, (4) husband’s conflict resolution attitudes, and (5) husband’s emotional connections.

Factor E-1: Husband’s gender role attitudes. Miki described Mark’s gender role attitudes as the following:

My husband likes the Asian way. Family stays together. Husband makes money and wife stays home.
He always told me, my baby need attention. I should stay home and I should take care of the baby.

My husband always told friends, "Oh! Canadian women are not good, too strong. Japanese women - Asian women are very nice."

He always says, "I like Japanese women. They really take care of me."

Mark’s gender role attitudes appeared to have influenced Miki’s gender role choice. However, she stated that she made her own gender role decisions and Mark agreed with her decisions. This indicates that Miki could maintain her gender role autonomy. Mark’s gender role attitudes also appeared to have affected the gender role practice between him and Miki. She describes Mark’s gender role practice in the following:

He was working the day time and he gets [a] second job, pizza delivery. He worked both and he really tried to support me.

He makes the breakfast for himself, and he makes the breakfast for me...After eating the supper, usually I clean, I wash the dishes. He usually reading the bible or he takes care of the baby.

Sometimes [I asked him], “Can you hold [the baby]?” “Just put in the crib.”

Sometimes he cooked but not after work. Sunday or Saturday. Lunch or dinner.

Before he did [more housework], but getting he didn’t. He changed. At first, he did things, and gradually he changed.

Mark’s gender role attitudes appeared to have affected Miki’s gender role practice as illustrated in the following statement:

Sometimes I asked him, “Can you help, I want to take a bath with the baby.” But sometimes he said, “I am tired, I can’t do that.” “Oh, OK. I do that.” I am naked, and I do everything because he is sleeping. He is tired.

Factor E-2: Husband’s financial attitudes. Miki described Mark’s financial attitudes in the following statements:

He said I could control some money. I did.
We had a joint account, he can withdraw so [I] cannot [control it]...But if he said, “I need gas for 20 dollars,” I have to give, right? So I can not control everything. He is an adult.

No, he doesn’t complain [about my money-spending].

[When he wanted to spend money], he said, “I am working.”

He said, “I don’t like just work, I want to enjoy the life.”

He haven’t used me first, but getting “Oh, she always do everything for me, and if I don’t have money, she [will] buy the food for me.”

He really tried to convince me.

Mark’s financial attitudes seemed to have affected Miki’s financial decision-making power, financial autonomy, and the financial resource distribution between them in two ways. On the one hand, Mark let Miki take charge of their finances, which appeared to have given her certain financial decision-making power. “I had more power - I can get the paycheck from him,” she said. According to Miki, Mark also shared his financial resources with her, “He really tried to support me,” she said. He also never limited her money spending, “He said, ‘you should spend.’.”

On the other hand, it seemed that Miki’s financial decision-making power, her financial autonomy, as well as her access to their financial resources were limited by Mark’s unwillingness to have her influence his spending decisions. As Miki described this:

He always spends money on his own...If he spends the money, I can’t. He joined the Chi-Kung Doe, 100 dollar for one month.

But he always spends the money by himself. I say I will be [an] immigrant [in] April so I need the money. I have to pay the 1000 dollar after the interview. But he bought a TV. It’s a big TV. Panasonic flat TV...He did [discuss with me], but I say ‘No, you can not’. But he wanted it, he said, ‘I don’t care what you say, I want to buy the TV. I will.’ And he already paid the deposit. I am tired to argue because I am taking care of the baby.
Before he [gave me] back the money, even five dollars. But we get marriage, we living together, it’s a different situation. If we don’t have enough food in the fridge, I have to buy.

Factor E-3: Husband’s cultural attitudes. Mark’s cultural attitudes appeared to have affected his efforts in making cultural adjustments and linguistic adjustments. According to Miki, Mark appreciated Japanese culture, especially the family values. He frequently asked her about Japanese culture and attempted to learn some Japanese. Miki said, “He was always asking and sometimes I feel I too tired [to teach him]. Too much.”

Factor E-4: Husband’s conflict resolution attitudes. In my opinion, Mark’s conflict resolution attitudes appeared to have affected Miki’s decision-making power also in areas other than finances. My observation was based on the following two examples. One example was Miki’s decision for abortion. “At the time I was thinking, ‘Oh, I don’t want abortion’, but sometimes I thought about abortion. But when I thought about abortion, he makes me feel guilty.” Another example was reflected on their religion differences, as Miki stated, “Because he is Christian, he really wanted me [to be] Christian. I am not yet, so he brought me to church.”

Factor E-5: Husband’s emotional connections. Mark’s emotional connections were reflected in his level of openness in his communication with Miki. Based on Miki’s description, it seemed that due to Mark’s addiction problem, he was not able to be honest with her and his attitudes left her many unanswered questions.” As Miki said, “He didn’t say about why he taking the drugs. Why he was depression? Why he sell the wedding ring?” Mark’s attitudes appeared to have affected Miki’s sense of personal power for their marital problem remained unsolved and she was not able to change the situation without his cooperation. Miki’s frustration was reflected in the following statement, “He shouldn’t run
away. He has to think about it.”

Summary

In the gender role domain, the influences from Miki’s early socialization seemed to be the major factor that contributed to her experiences that it appeared to have affected her gender role expectations, gender role identity, and gender role choice, as well as contributed to her compromising behaviours in her interactions with Mark. Miki’s gender role practice seemed to be dominated by the influences from her upbringing, and also seemed to be influenced by Mark’s gender role attitudes. Mark appeared to have certain influences on Miki’s gender role choice but also seemed to have respected her autonomy in making her gender role decisions. The social context of Canada appeared to have brought Miki a certain degree of gender role liberation.

In the finances and decision-making domain, Mark’s attitudes seemed to have played an important role that contributed to Miki’s experiences. On one hand, Mark showed the willingness to share his financial resources and also let Miki be in charge of their family finances, which seemed to have given Miki certain financial decision-making power; on the other hand, Mark’s financial instability and entitlement decreased Miki’s access to his financial resources, and also seemed to have limited her financial autonomy and financial decision-making power. Mark’s conflict resolution attitudes also seemed to have decreased Miki’s decision-making power in other areas. Besides, Miki’s financial resources and contributions also appeared to have certain impacts on her experiences. Having her own saving appeared to have brought Miki certain financial autonomy and financial decision-making power, but not having steady income and financial contributions seemed to have led Miki to restrain her financial autonomy and financial decision-making power. Miki’s
language barriers and her personality also made her back down from conflicts in the decision-making process, which also seemed to have decreased her decision-making power. In addition, the financial difficulties brought Miki financial concerns, which limited her financial autonomy.

In the culture and language domain, although Mark displayed interest in Miki’s culture and made certain efforts in cultural and linguistic adjustments, Miki was still responsible for making more linguistic adjustments and also had less linguistic power, compared to Mark’s, because English was the only language used in the marriage.

In the personal power domain, Miki experienced a sense of powerlessness when Mark would not share his problem with her and they could not reach a higher level of emotional connections, but Miki had acquired her sense of personal power from a few different avenues: Coming to terms with her own cultural identity led Miki to accept her language limitation; having a good level of social competence provided Miki more bargaining power and the strength in dealing with crisis; her attribution and interpretation of her experiences further generated resilience within her. All together, these elements seemed to have enhanced Miki’s sense of personal power.
Sayuri's Case

Description of the Couple

Sayuri had been in Canada for eight years. She had graduated from a university in Japan. Sayuri was in her 40s and was currently working as a freelance writer for Japanese media both in Japan and in Canada. Sayuri had obtained her immigrant visa and sponsored her husband Shane, who was an immigrant from Europe. Shane had finished his university degree in Canada and was working as a freelance computer programmer. Sayuri and Shane had been married for four years and they did not have any children. They both were working from home currently.

The Story

In Sayuri’s memory, her father was always away from home and was always in a bar with his friends. In her impression, her father always went to hot springs. “I saw his pictures, always wear Yukata in the hot spring, drinking in the Tatami room.” Her mother never went out because “she has to raise the children. She has to help the shop.” Sayuri’s father inherited a shop from her grandfather but he never ran it. Her mother took care of the business and took care of the family while her father socialized in the bars.

Sayuri’s parents had a very traditional type of marriage; her mother married into her father’s family. According to Sayuri, within this type of marriage, women usually had a rough time. Despite the hardship, Sayuri’s mother was patient all the time. When she was a child, Sayuri watched her mother do everything around the house and she thought it was the way women should be. “I thought it was the natural way...I thought women can not go out after marriage.” She never questioned it. “Everybody was traditional. My family, my grandparents, my father, my mother. At that time, there is no other way.”

Sayuri’s parents were traditional, but they never taught her to be a traditional woman.
They never expected her to be a housewife in the future. In her early twenties, Sayuri believed in the Japanese saying that “wife has to walk after the husband three steps behind.” She thought it was a good way of marriage. She did not think she could do everything by herself and she thought that she needed a man to help her in her life. At that time, what Sayuri wanted was a strong husband whom she could depend on and who could guide her.

Yet, even then she already decided that she did not want to be a full time housewife. She wanted to establish her own career before she got married. “I want to live my life not only a wife, not only a mother, and as a woman. I wanted some status or the way of life.” Although it was common for women in her generation to get married before the age of 25, Sayuri did not plan to get married so early because she was afraid that she would lose her freedom after she got married. However, she had never thought that her marriage would be delayed for so long.

After finishing university, Sayuri worked as an editor and a writer for the media. She traveled around the world due to the nature of her jobs. While working, she lived in Tokyo alone for all those years. Being a single woman, Sayuri had to do lots of things by herself. Years after years, she had become independent and accomplished many things. She realized that she was capable to taking care of herself without a man. She no longer wanted to walk three steps behind her future husband. It was not easy to be a single woman at her age in Japan. People talked about her age and made comments like “she is strong enough to be single”, “maybe she does not need to get married.” People often called her a strong woman. Sayuri did not like to be labeled as a strong woman because it implied that she was too tough and she scared men away. These comments made Sayuri feel upset and hurt. She wanted to get married but just could not find the right person. “Marriage needs [a] man. I cannot do it
by my own...sometimes I had very sad time, broken heart, of course. People did not think so just because the fact I am single and I am working.”

Working two jobs made Sayuri’s life very busy, and eventually she was tired of that kind of life style. She had already established her career and status and she could foresee what her future would be like. She wondered if there was something else out there for her. She wanted some other challenges and she wanted to accomplish something different. Through her traveling, Sayuri met lots of Japanese who lived and worked overseas and their life seemed interesting to her. One of her wishes was to be able to conduct interviews in English so she would not have to rely on interpreters.

Sayuri decided to give herself two years to try out living and working abroad. She wished that these two years would bring her new inspiration and she could figure out what she wanted for her life. Sayuri was in her 30s and she was afraid if she did not take actions soon, she would never do it. Once she made up her mind, Sayuri began making plans. For two years, she tried to save money and eventually she took a leave from work and came to Vancouver, which was one of her favorite places in the world.

After arriving in Canada, Sayuri devoted all of her energy into studying English. She enjoyed her life as a student again. While attending ESL school, Sayuri started exploring different avenues of working in Canada. Since she had passed the age limit for applying for a working holiday visa, she figured that becoming a landed immigrant was the easiest way for her to stay and work in Canada. Knowing it would be difficult to establish a new career in a foreign country, Sayuri began strategizing her future career options before she applied for her landed immigrant visa.

She visited a few Japanese media and started a volunteer job. She realized that it was
impossible to survive by writing for the Japanese media here. It was more difficult than what she anticipated but she did not feel discouraged. She said, “I have a dream but also I imagine the worst case so I have kind of the worst to best...I like fantasy but in real life I have to prepare for anything.” She tried out different avenues to get a job and eventually she landed in some contract work from the media both in Japan and Canada. Sayuri was able to continue her career as a freelance writer. However, her income was still not good enough for survival and she had to partially rely on her savings in the past few years.

Looking back at the past few years, Sayuri felt lucky for the opportunities she was given. She did not regret her decision and she did not see the changes in her career as a loss. She said, “Because I choose to come here, so if I have to quit my career, it’s because I chose to come here. I have to accept it...I have to cope with it.” Instead, she felt proud for having accomplished her immigration dream, having proved to herself that she could survive on her own in a foreign country, and having made improvement in her English.

Working as a freelance writer, Sayuri felt the need to connect with people in order to avoid isolation. She found it difficult to have a close tie with English-speaking Canadians because she needed to speak her own language to express herself freely. She started expand her network by attending workshops and different activities held by Japanese organizations in Vancouver. The involvement in the Japanese community helped Sayuri settle down and gain a sense of belongingness in Canada. She became more involved and began to provide supports and help for other new comers.

While still attending ESL school, Sayuri met Shane. Shane came from Europe to complete his university degree. They both stayed in the ESL class for a long time and they became close friends. Shane was interested in Japanese culture and he had already been
studying Japanese language when they met. Sayuri found that Shane different from Canadian due to his European background. She felt that they shared similar values and mentalities. Sayuri also found that Shane’s personality was similar to Japanese that he was quiet, reserved and humble, but at the same time he always had his own thoughts and opinions and could express his view when he needed to.

It appeared to Sayuri that Shane was the combination of a Japanese and a Canadian man. Sayuri was never attracted to Canadian men. She found Canadian men’s values too different from hers. “I like Canadian nationality, characters but personally maybe I can not get along with them.” Even after living in Canada for a few years, Sayuri still wished to marry a Japanese man and she never thought that she would one day marry a Caucasian man. “Because I am Japanese. My identity is Japanese so I am more comfortable with men who have [the] same cultural background.”

It never came across Sayuri’s mind about the possibility of a romantic relationship with Shane because he was much younger than her. When Shane expressed his feelings for her, she refused him. No matter how comfortable she felt around Shane or how much she liked him, Sayuri just could not break off the barrier of their age difference. Shane did not give up and he was always there waiting for her. Sayuri knew that the only barrier was her own mind. She did not have to worry about any opposition from her family because she had total autonomy and independence to make her own decisions. One day, a line in her horoscope struck her. “It said something like, ‘You care too much about things like age difference, and you have to get rid of that kind of idea.’” It was like a wakening call for Sayuri. All of a sudden, Sayuri broke out her own barrier and accepted Shane into her life.

Sayuri and Shane had spent a few years together and gotten to know each other
before they decided to get married. Sayuri visited Shane’s parents in Europe and gained more understanding about his family. In the beginning of their marriage, Shane was still in university and was supported by his parents. Shane did not have much income and their money was tight, but it did not concern Sayuri because she had faith in Shane. She believed that Shane would be a hard worker once he completed his degree. They shared everything they had together. “Very tough, but kind of fun. I am flexible. I just enjoy it.”

Shane usually got up first and began to work. He worked at home and he usually cooked breakfast and lunch for Sayuri and himself. In the afternoon, they either went out together or took care of their own business separately. Most of the time Sayuri cooked supper, but Shane sometimes did too. Shane enjoyed cooking and Sayuri loved it. “That’s a different point from Japanese [men]...he likes that and I am very happy.” Sometimes when Sayuri was busy, Shane would cook supper and also do the dishes. “He understands my work. Sometimes I am very hurry just before the deadline, so he understood.”

After supper, they either spent time together or went back to their work. They both shared housework but they never had a clear division of it. “We’ve never made rules. Naturally we do something, very naturally. He became doing cooking very naturally. I’ve never asked him but he did it.” They each did their own laundry. Sayuri was happy about how they should share housework and she actually thought she should contribute more because she was the one who was disorganized and often made a big mess at home. Sayuri sometimes felt sorry for Shane because despite of having more income, he still contributed more in housework, and she neither brought enough income home nor did she do enough housework.

In terms of money, Sayuri and Shane each had their own bank account and they
shared the cost of living together. There was no clear division of their financial responsibilities because either of them had fixed income. Their financial contributions were based on how much money each person had at the time of need. Normally, the person who could afford paying the bill at that moment would take care of it. They never had any argument about money. Their financial arrangement was different before. Initially, Sayuri always made sure that she paid an equal share and she always calculated their expenses and divided them evenly. Sayuri did not feel comfortable depending on Shane financially. Over the past few years, Shane tried to convince her that they were a married couple and they should have their “wallets together”. Gradually, Sayuri started to feel more relaxed about depending on Shane financially to a certain degree.

Sayuri still wishes to have her own job and her own income even if Shane had a full time job in the future. She did not want to ask her husband for money each time she needed it. She did not want to be like traditional Japanese women who always had to be patient and wait for their husband’s permission when they wanted to spend money, and career status was important to Sayuri that she did not want to give it up. Ideally, Sayuri would prefer to be a part-time housewife and devote her time in community services. “I do not want to be an isolated wife.” When it came to decision-making, Sayuri and Shane always discussed and made decisions together. Sayuri valued her freedom and right to make decisions. “We need freedom...wife is not slave.”

Sometimes Sayuri and Shane fought, too. Whenever they fought, Sayuri always tried to figure out why Shane did certain things in certain ways and what he was thinking about. “From the first time I made up my mind [that] I don’t want to fight again with the same things. Because we basically had different cultures. That means our way of thinking is
different, so if we don’t solve the problem, we will fight again with the same reason in the future. I don’t want to do it. I don’t want to repeat. If it’s the same reason, I have to solve at the moment.” Sayuri found out that they basically had different common senses and different thinking patterns due to their cultural differences. They often did things based on their own common senses, and did not realize that their common senses were different until conflicts happened.

Sayuri and Shane dealt with their conflicts by talking about them and tried to figure out the origin of the problem. Their common solution was for each person to keep his or her own way and the other person would just accept it. They would not force each other to compromise. Sayuri did not have a certain mind set about how things should be. “When the problem comes, then we talk about it.” Her reason was, “If I have only this way, it makes me more pain...because my mind, I make myself suffer, pain. But if I have flexibility, much more choices.” Sayuri found it interesting and funny to discover their cultural differences. Their different thinking processes often amazed her. “Wow! Japanese never thought it.” Overtime, Sayuri had become more familiar with Shane’s thinking patterns and often she could predict what he would do. One thing Sayuri had learned was to be more vocal about her thoughts. “I think I have to talk everything. Basically we have different cultural background...I should not expect him to understand me without speaking.”

They communicate both in English and Japanese. Sayuri’s Japanese was better than Shane’s but Shane’s English was better than Sayuri’s. It did not bother Sayuri that Shane’s English was better than hers because she had realized that she would never speak perfect English. When they communicate in Japanese, Sayuri would switch to English when Shane could not follow. She knew that she had the advantage of the Japanese language but she did
not think it was fair to Shane. When speaking English, Sayuri often had to use a dictionary and it took longer for her to explain herself, but she did not mind it. "I try to understand that mind is more important. Just try to understand." Sayuri did not think that they had problems in the language area, and she believed that Shane’s capability to speak Japanese helped their marriage. She thought that Shane’s willingness to learn Japanese demonstrated his appreciation for her culture, and she believed the mutual appreciation for each other’s culture was very important in an interracial marriage. A few years ago Sayuri had tried to learn Shane’s language but she eventually gave up because it was too difficult.

Overall, Sayuri felt very satisfied in her marriage and she believed that she and her husband had an equal relationship. Neither of them had the idea of dominating each other or having power over each other. "We just walk side by side. I don’t need to [be] behind him," Sayuri laughed when she said that during the interview. Sayuri thought the gender equality in their marriage just happened naturally and it had never been an issue for them. She believed that her ability and experience of living in Canada independently before her marriage had contributed to the gender equality in her marriage. She also thought that many intermarried Japanese women had lost their autonomy or equality in the marriage because of their lack of understanding of this culture and basic surviving skills, which made them depended on their husbands.

Sayuri witnessed many unequal and unhappy interracial marriages. She found that many Japanese people still had the tendency to worship Americans or Caucasians. When she went back to Japan, she received lots of envious comments about her interracial marriage from Japanese women and she was treated as someone special. She believed that many young Japanese women still held unrealistic images about Western men and interracial
marriage. She remembered that she was fascinated with the American’s life style when she was a teenager. Their big living room and big kitchen made her Japanese Tatami room looked so unattractive. Yet, that fantasy for the Western life style was long gone and she said, “I loved Tatami now.”
### Table 7: Domains and Areas of Experiences in Sayuri’s Case

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<td>1-2. Gender role identity</td>
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<td>1-3. Gender role choice</td>
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<td>3-2. Linguistic adjustment</td>
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<td>4 Personal Power</td>
<td>4-1. Sense of personal power</td>
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*Note: This table reflects the first step of analysis, which summarizes the participant’s specific area of experiences (right column). These experiences are grouped into four domains (left column).*
Table 8: Categories and Factors Contributing to Sayuri's Experiences

<table>
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<th>Factor</th>
<th>Area of Experiences</th>
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<td>A-1. Influences from early socialization</td>
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<td>B. Financial and Cultural</td>
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<td>B-3. Social competence</td>
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<td>B-5. Language resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>C. Socio-Cultural Factors</td>
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<td>D. Personal-Psychological</td>
<td>D-1. Cultural identity</td>
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Note: This table reflects the second step of analysis, which illustrates how a particular contributing factor (the second column) might have affected the participant’s specific areas of experiences (the third column), as identified in the previous table. The contributing factors are grouped into five categories (the first column).
Analysis

This section identifies factors that might have affected Sayuri’s experiences related to issues of gender equality. Sayuri’s experiences are separated into four different domains and each domain contains various areas of experiences, as displayed in Table 7 (see Table 7). Factors contributing to Sayuri’s experiences are summarized into five categories and they are: (1) gender role beliefs, (2) financial and cultural resources, (3) socio-cultural factors, (4) personal-psychological factors, and (5) husband’s attitudes. Table 2 (see Table 2) displays how each factor might have contributed to Sayuri’s experiences in each area as discussed in the following:

Category A: Gender Role Beliefs

This category included two factors: (1) influences from early socialization, and (2) new gender role awareness. It seemed that Sayuri had developed a new set of gender role beliefs that were significant different from what she had learned in her upbringing, and her new gender role awareness appeared to have a stronger influence on her experiences than her old ideology. Both factors and their possible influences on Sayuri’s experiences are discussed below:

Factor A-1: Influences from early socialization. The major influences Sayuri had received in her early socialization were her parent’s gender role practices, as well as the larger society in Japan. She said, “My father always went out… went to some bar but my mother never [did]. Never. She has to raise the children. She has to help the shop.” “My father never did much of [housework]. “Everybody was traditional. My family - my grandparents, my father, and my mother…there was no other way.” The following statements indicated that Sayuri did not have much gender role awareness of her own when
she was young:

Of course when I was a child, I didn't know about the situation and I didn't think about it...In my mind I thought after married, women became like that. I thought it's the natural way, normal way.

I had never thought [it was] unfair for them because at that time it was like that. It was normal at that time.

The following statements reflected the gender role beliefs Sayuri had acquired from her early socialization:

*Japanese has a proverb, “A wife has to walk after the husband three steps behind.” I thought that was a good way.*

*I would be happy to depend on my husband and I would be happy [to be] with him, walking three steps behind [him].*

The other influence from Sayuri’s early socialization was her parent’s gender role expectations of her. Sayuri mentioned that despite her parents’ “traditional” gender role practices, they had never imposed any particular gender role on her. “They never forced us to do something...My parents never talked to us that to be a housewife was better or women should be in the house. Never told us.”

The main influences from Sayuri’s early socialization seemed to be on her gender role expectations, gender role identity and gender role choice. Sayuri mentioned, “If my husband has enough income, I don’t want to have a full time job,” and “[I would] keep working but not hard.” Although Sayuri wished to continue working, her expectation for her husband to be the main provider seemed to be the result from early socialization influences. Sayuri also stated that she did not like to be labeled as a strong - meaning scary in Japanese culture - woman. She said, ‘Because I am influenced by Japanese traditional idea. This scary woman is not liked by people.” Besides, Sayuri’s parents’ lack of specific gender role expectation seemed to have provided her the freedom to develop her own gender role
identity. Sayuri’s following statements indicated that she had already developed a clear gender role identity before she acquired new gender role awareness:

Before university, I already thought I wanted to have some work. I wanted to live my life not only a wife, not only a mother, [but] as a woman. I wanted some status or the way of life.

I don’t want to be an isolated wife...I want to do something in the society, to be part of the society.

I had no idea about [being] independent. Anyway I want to have my own income by myself. I thought I wouldn’t get married before 25...because until 25 I didn’t think I could have a good career start or my own status. And from my mothers life I thought after marriage, women can not do many things so I don’t want to lose the freedom after 25.

Factor A-2: New gender role awareness. As Sayuri acknowledged herself, her gender role awareness came from her experiences of living independently. The change in Sayuri’s gender role belief was reflected in the following statements:

In my twenties I imagined my future husband should be leading me.

Before I established my career or before I lived alone...I thought I could not do everything. Probably I need some guy’s help.

After [living alone for] a long time [in my] thirties, I already did many things by myself, so I realized even women can do that.

I realized that I can do it if I want to... I don’t need to depend on some guy. Just I do it by myself.

Sayuri’s experiences seemed to have also brought her the concept of gender equality, which could be observed in her comments, “Ideal relationship between the married couple is just equal,” and “We need freedom. Women are not slaves.”

One effect of Sayuri’s new gender role awareness appeared to be her gender role expectations. She stated that she no longer wanted to walk three steps behind her husband and she did not want to have a marriage like her parents’. She said, “I can not have that kind of marriage...I don’t need to be patient.” Her ideal husband would be “like he has also the
idea that both couple should be equal.” Sayuri’s gender role expectations, which were also her definitions of equality, were demonstrated in the following:

> We need common expense, like mortgage or rental fee, and electricity or telephone or something, so maybe he pay for that and I pay for food or something.

> If we both [are] going out, as employees and go to the company and work Monday to Friday, nine to five, and only I have to do [all the] housework, I think it’s unequal.

> I would not ask him to do housework if I am not working, he gets income and we can live with his income so I have to do my work as a housewife...that’s equal.

> I don’t like to be dominated...I don’t want to dominate him.

> Some wife...even she wants to work, just [have to be] patient. I don’t like that way.

> If I want to work a little bit or join some kind of volunteer work or something and my husband doesn’t want me to and forces me not to do it, that’s no equal...I want him to accept my way of continuing career.”

> Some wives [are] just patient to buy something or to do something because she doesn’t have her own income...[In some Japanese marriages], if the wife wants to do something, she has to ask the husband for [it]. I don’t know how they do it.” “[it’s not equal] if I have to be patient too much.

Sayuri’s new awareness appeared to have influenced her gender role practice. Unlike her mother who did everything at home, both Sayuri and her husband shared financial and household responsibilities.

**Categories B: Financial and Cultural Resources**

This category included the following factors: (1) employment, (2) financial resources and contributions, (3) social competence, and (4) cultural advantage, and (5) language resources. Although employment and financial resources and contributions were interrelated, they seemed to have different effects on Sayuri’s experiences, as discussed in the following:

**Factor B-1: Employment.** After coming to Canada, Sayuri experienced a change in her employment status and she became a freelance writer working on contract rather than a
full-time editor. Sayuri’s employment status appeared to have affected the *gender role*
*practice* between her and her husband, as Sayuri stated, “If I am very busy, he just does it
(cooking) and washes the dishes.” Yet, Sayuri’s change of employment status decreased her
financial resources, as discussed in the following.

**Factor B-2: Financial resources and contributions.** Sayuri’s financial resources and
contributions went through changes at different times of her marriage. In the beginning,
when her husband was still a student, Sayuri possessed more financial resources and made
more financial contributions. After her husband started working, his income increased while
Sayuri’s income decreased and she began to rely on his financial support to a certain degree.
Although Sayuri stated that her income was “not good enough,” having her own financial
resources and contributions seemed to have brought her *financial ownership* and *financial
autonomy*. Sayuri stated that she had her “own bank account” and the access to her money
so she “did not need to be patient” about her money spending. However, Sayuri did not seem
to have a sense of financial ownership over her husband, which was reflected in her comment
that she did not feel comfortable spending his money.

**Factor B-3: Social competence.** Sayuri social competence was reflected in her ability
to plan and implement her immigration dream, to strategize her career development, and to
access social resources, which eventually helped her obtain her immigrant status and survive
independently as an immigrant alone in a foreign country. The following descriptions
demonstrated Sayuri’s social competence:

*I had a dream but also I imagine the worse case so I had kind of the worse to best
[imagined].*

*When I was waiting for the visa, I was thinking how I could live here. So I made
many possible ways in my mind. I think it’s difficult to find the job here because I can
not write in English. It’s very difficult. It’s not for my ability so I went to some*
Japanese media [to find opportunities]. After get the visa, very fortunately I had a big contract to work from Japanese kind of translating company, so the first project I got bunch of money...I can survive so far.

I wanted to have a network...I needed to talk in Japanese sometimes to share some ideas with Japanese. I went into the Japanese community by myself. First time I just wanted to have some friends, network, but recently I became kind of supporting side...It's very helpful for me.

It seemed that Sayuri's social competence had brought her a sense of personal power, as Sayuri stated in a confident voice,

[For some other intermarried women], because [in]majority cases, after getting married, they will have immigrate visa as spouse, but I already and visa so I don't need to depend on him. That's a big point. And also the visa, they have to depend on the husband, but in my case, different. I already immigrated here.

Some [wives] are very dependent. Have to depend. Because some of them just came here that they met in Japan and came here...even they met in the student days, after marriage their life, especially wife's life became different. Some didn't realize that before marriage. The most different point between me and that kind of wives are just I was already independent here...and also knew the way of life in Canada because I already stay here one year before I met him.

As a result, she said, "I don't need to obey him," and "we just walk side by side. I don't need to [walk] behind him."

Factor B-4: Cultural advantage. One of the unique characteristics of Sayuri's marriage was that both she and her husband were immigrants and he did not have the cultural advantage as many Canadian husbands had. In comparison, they had similar levels of cultural resources in the Canadian society. As Sayuri recognized herself, unlike many other intermarried women, she was not under the pressure to adapt to the Canadian host culture. In fact, due to her husband's interest in Japanese cultural, Sayuri appeared to have more cultural advantage and her husband was making more cultural adjustments.

Factor B-5: Language resources. In Sayuri's marriage, Japanese was one of the language used, but not her husband's native language. Sayuri's advantage in Japanese
language appeared to have affected the level of linguistic adjustment in the marriage in that her husband was making more adjustments. It seemed to have given Sayuri more linguistic power. She said, “If we are talking in Japanese, I have advantage.”

Category C: Socio-Cultural Factors

Social context was the only factor identified under this category.

Factor C-1: Social context. It seemed that the Canadian social context had brought Sayuri a certain degree of gender role liberation. Sayuri disclosed the social pressure she experienced as a single woman who passed 30 in Japan:

In Japan, always, “How old are you?” and “you have not married yet? not yet?” Like that, always.

Just the fact I am single and I am working, “Well, she is strong enough to be single.” Especially middle age men... [they said] I am just strong... Some men just said it... I was hurt... A lot of hurt.

Only because I was single in the twenties and early thirties, people thought I was strong... “Maybe she doesn’t need to marry.”... In Japan, to say strong for women is [to say they are] kind of scary.

While in Canada, Sayuri felt relieved from such social pressure as a woman. She felt that she was no longer judged. She said, “Not only men, people don’t care about the age.”

Category D: Personal-Psychological Factors

Factors in this category included (1) cultural identity, (2) personality, (3) life philosophy, (4) attribution and interpretation, (5) financial concerns, and (6) cultural attitudes.

Factor D-1: Cultural identity. Sayuri’s cultural identity seemed to have gone through certain changes. As a teenager, she had some certain fantasies for the West. She said,

We are very influenced by America. Just after the war Japanese work hard to have a better life. So better life means close to American way, not improve the Japanese way of life - It’s close to American way. In my mind I have kind of idea when I was young,
maybe teenager - because Western style [had] big kitchen, nice kitchenware, bedroom - because my house has a Tatami room.

Sayuri stated that her longing for the West was gone before she came to Canada because she had already become more “realistic”. After a few years staying in Canada, Sayuri’s cultural identity seemed to have changed and she had gained acceptance and appreciation of her own culture, the Canadian host culture and other ethnic groups:

*I am Japanese. My identity is Japanese.*

*Canadians are so different, but basically I like them. I like Canadian nationality, character*

*I met many many people from other countries, and some have similar culture as Japan. Some have totally different, I think I become acceptable.*

Sayuri’s coming to terms with her cultural identity might have contributed to her acceptance of her language limitations in English and provided her a *sense of personal power* in the linguistic area. As she said, “I think it’s very difficult to be fluent like Canadian. It’s kind of impossible.”

Factors D-2: Personality. Sayuri identified independence as one of her personality traits. She described herself as “very independent.” Sayuri’s independence was further reflected in the following statements:

*My family live in the countryside and I was in Tokyo so I lived alone for a long time, so that’s kind of surviving way for a single woman.*

*My mother knows I am very independent. I have an independent opinion so she never had [different opinions] against me, never had against opinion. [She] just respects my opinion, respects my decision.*

Sayuri also mentioned that “some people say I am strong.” It seemed to me that she had exhibited the trait of determination, which was reflected in her statement:

*I choose to study English, and one of my promises is I want to have interview in English by myself without interpreters...I wanted to try [to] challenge my ability.*
It seemed that Sayuri’s independence had affected her *gender role identity* and
*gender role choice*. In order to maintain her independence, Sayuri said, “I don’t want to
depend on my husband on everything. I want to have my own income.” “I don’t want to ask
every time that ‘I want to buy some book, please give me money’. I don’t want that.”

Sayuri’s independence also seemed to have brought her a *sense of personal power*,
like what she said, “I [was] already independent mentally and I already had an independent
life – enough...I don’t need to depend on him.” Sayuri’s determination seemed to have
affected her *gender role behaviours* as well as her *sense of personal power* in that she often
engaged her husband in resolving their differences and yield productive results. The effects
were illustrated in the following statement:

> From the first time, I made up my mind. I don’t want to fight again with the same
> things...If we don’t solve the problem, we will fight again with the same reason in the
> future. I don’t want to do it. I don’t want to repeat. If it’s the same reason, I have to
> solve at the moment. So I always talk to him, “Why did you do it? “Why did you
> think...how did you think?” So he explained it why he did...his reason, so I
> understand.

**Factor D-3: Life philosophy.** Sayuri used the word “flexible” to describe herself. In
my opinions, her flexibility was a reflection of her life philosophy, rather than a personality
trait. Sayuri’s life philosophy was portrayed as the following:

> I think one different point between me and other women maybe [is] flexibility.
> Because if I have only this way, it sometimes makes me more pain...maybe suffer.
> Because my mind makes myself suffer, pain. But if I have flexibility, much more
> choice.

Sayuri’s life philosophy appeared to have affected her *gender role expectations* in the
marriage. Sayuri stated she wanted to have an equal relationship but did not have rules about
how things should be, and “when problem comes, we talk about it.” When asked about her
opinion about a certain Japanese life style that the husband worked long hours and left the
childrearing tasks to the wife, Sayuri responded,

_Husband works for the family, right? If husband hates this life style, we have to think about that, but [if] husband likes to work and accept this life style, I am OK. Maybe we have discussion about keeping family life...It's like I have flexibility._

It also seemed that Sayuri's flexibility had affected the _gender role practice_ in her marriage, which was illustrated in her statement, “We’ve never made rules. Naturally we do something, very naturally.”

Sayuri’s flexibility was also found to have affected the _financial resource_ distribution between her and her husband. It was reflected in her financial support of her husband in the beginning of their relationship: “We just shared everything. [Financially] it was very tough, but kind of fun...I am flexible. I just enjoy it...We never fought about money.”

**Factor D-4: Attribution and interpretation.** The combination of Sayuri’s personality and life philosophy appeared to have a profound influence on her attribution and interpretation of her experiences, which seemed to have enhanced her _sense of personal power_. How Sayuri’s attribution and interpretation of her experiences might have affected her sense of personal power was illustrated in the following areas: First of all, they seemed to affected how she perceived her career change: “Even what will happen, I have to accept. I have to cope with it. I already made up my mind to accept anything.” “[If] I can not continue [my career], it’s because I chose to come here so I had to accept it.”

Second of all, she was able to validate her accomplishment in the immigration process. She said, “I have never done that before...so that’ one of the big things for me to live alone in a foreign country. So I did it. I have kind of confidence that I can live here. Yes!”
Finally, she was able to validate her improvement in her English. “I studied hard and I can speak English little bit better than before. That’s a big point I gained.” Sayuri’s sense of personal power in the language area was illustrated in her easy attitude about her language barriers in the following statement, “One problem is [that] my English is not so good so sometimes I have to use a dictionary, or we need more time, but I try to explain with the detail.” She also stated that it did not bother her that her husband’s English was better than hers because “I think I try to understand that mind is important...Just try to understand [each other] is important.”

Factor D-5: Financial concerns. It seemed that as long as she could maintain a certain degree of financial autonomy, Sayuri’s gender role choice would be determined by her financial concerns. Sayuri stated “If my husband has enough income, I don’t want to have a full time job,” and “[I would] keep working but not hard.” Whether she would choose to quit her job, Sayuri said, “Depends on his income. Income is important.”

Factor D-6: Cultural attitudes. Due to her husband’s interest in Japanese culture, Sayuri had more Japanese cultural advantage than her husband. This condition made Sayuri’s cultural attitudes important to be discussed. Sayuri’s cultural attitudes were reflected below:

Because we basically have different culture and that means our ways of thinking are different.

If we still keep just Japanese way of point of view, it’s very difficult to understand them. But just have another point of view or just stand [on] their side, it’s very easy to understand.

[I] explain my Japanese way, and [he explains] his country’s way. We don’t force each other [to change].

Sayuri’s cultural attitudes appeared to have affected her efforts in making cultural adjustments and linguistic adjustments.
I basically think I have to talk everything. Basically we have different culture background, so if I don’t say anything, he can not understand anything. I should not expect him to understand me without speaking.

I studied his language. I tried. Very difficult. I kind of give up...Because I wanted to know his language, and also [when] I went to his country, that was better.

Even he speaks Japanese, I know he is not fluent...so we change to speak English

Category E: Husband’s attitudes

This category contains three factors: (1) husband’s gender role attitudes, (2) husband’s financial attitudes, and (c) husband’s cultural attitudes.

Factor E-1: Husband’s gender role attitudes. It appeared that Shane’s gender role attitudes had affected Sayuri’s gender role autonomy. Sayuri felt that her husband had respected and supported her desire to work and he would never stop her from working. She said, “My husband will never say that. He likes [it that] I am working.” Shane’s attitudes also seemed to have affected the gender role practice between her and Sayuri, which was reflected in his initiation of household tasks, as Sayuri described:

Naturally we do something, very naturally. He became doing cooking very naturally. I’ve never asked him but he did it.

He likes that (doing dishes). I am very happy.

He understands my work. Sometimes I am very hurry just before the deadline, so he understands. He just says, “OK, I am doing [it]. I am cooking. You are busy. NO problem.”

If I am very busy, he just does it (cooking) and washes the dishes.

Factor E-2: Husband’s financial attitudes. According to Sayuri, Shane never used his economic strength to gain more power in their relationship. Sayuri said, “He is not that kind of person.” Shane’s financial attitudes appeared to have affected the financial resource distribution as well as Sayuri’s financial autonomy. When Sayuri felt uncomfortable
spending Shane’s money, “He said, ‘We are married, so our wallet should be together.’.”

Shane’s attitudes also seemed to have contributed to Sayuri’s financial decision-making power in a sense that she had maintained her decision-making autonomy on her own matters but was also involved in their mutual decisions. Sayuri stated, “My personal matter, my person thing, I make my decision, and husband [made his own decision with his personal matter], and both if we have to talk. So we talk and make decision together.”

Factor E-3: Husband’s cultural attitudes. It also appeared that Shane’s cultural attitudes had prompted him to make more cultural adjustments and linguistic adjustments, which were reflected in Sayuri’s statement:

\begin{quote}
He was already interested in Japan before he met me...He was impressed by Japanese characters, Japanese culture, especially maybe politeness or something, so he was interested in Japan and Japanese culture. And he has been learning Japanese for many years.
\end{quote}

Shane’s interest in Japanese culture and language seemed to have turned Sayuri’s cultural background and Japanese language into powerful resources for her, which somehow enhanced her linguistic power as well as her sense of personal power. Sayuri stated,

\begin{quote}
If [we are] talking in Japanese, I have advantage.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
He often asks me about Japanese culture, Japanese history, [so] in that area of course I have more power or knowledge than him.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
Because that means he likes my culture. That’s a very good for me. I heard some husbands, Canadian husbands force wives to adopt Canadian way, because ‘you come here, come to Canada, you have to accept Canadian way, or you have to adopt yourself to Canadian way’. Some husbands actually say so.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
[I] explain my Japanese way, and [he explains] his country's way. We don't force each other [to change].
\end{quote}

Summary

In the gender role domain, Sayuri’s experiences appeared to be mainly dominated by
her new gender role awareness, although there was still certain influences from her early socialization had less impact. The influences from Sayuri’s early socialization and her personality seemed to have contributed to the formation of her gender role identity and her current gender role choice, but financial concerns seemed to be a crucial element in determining her future gender role choices. Sayuri’s gender role expectations appeared to be affected by influences from her early socialization, her new gender role awareness as well as her life philosophy. She wished to have an equal relationship in the marriage, but also expected her husband to be the main provider. Her life philosophy appeared to have brought flexibility in her gender role expectations. Sayuri’s gender role practice seemed to be influenced by her new gender role awareness, her employment, her life philosophy, as well as Shane’s gender role attitudes. Sayuri’s personality also seemed to have affected her gender role behaviours in terms of her initiation in conflict resolution. Shane’s gender role attitudes appeared to have provided Sayuri gender role autonomy, and the social context of Canada seemed to have brought her certain gender role liberation.

In the finances and decision-making domain, Sayuri’s financial autonomy appeared to be determined by her financial resources and contributions, as well as Shane’s financial attitudes. Shane was willing to share his financial resources with Sayuri, which appeared to have provided her certain financial autonomy. Having her own sources of income seemed to have enhanced Sayuri’s financial autonomy. Sayuri’s life philosophy appeared to have made her flexible in sharing her own financial resources in the beginning of their relationship. Shane’s respect for Sayuri’s opinions also seemed to have brought her financial decision-making power.

In the culture and language domain, Shane’s cultural attitudes seemed to have
motivated him to make cultural and linguistic adjustments, which turned Sayuri’s Japanese cultural and language into resources for her and enhanced her linguistic power. Conversely, Sayuri’s had handled her cultural and linguistic resources with sensitivity by making more linguistic adjustments while communicating with Shane.

In the personal power domain, Sayuri’s sense of personal power appeared to have come from a few different sources: Her cultural identity seemed to have helped her accept her language limitations; her social competence seemed to have brought her a sense of independence; her personality appeared to have enhanced her capacity in conflict resolution; her attribution and interpretation of her experiences appeared to have enabled her to validate her accomplishments. Shane’s cultural attitudes also appeared to have helped Sayuri maintain her ethnic pride. These elements all seemed to have increased Sayuri’s sense of personal power.
Tomoko’s Case

Description of the Couple

Tomoko was 32 years old and had been married for four years. Before the marriage, Tomoko and her husband Tom had lived together for a year. Tomoko majored in English in a Japanese university and Tom was a college graduate. At the time of the interview, Tomoko had been in Canada for a total of six years and was working in a Japanese retail store part-time; Tom owned his business. They had a two-year-old daughter.

The Story

In Tomoko’s eyes, her parents had a different relationship from many other Japanese couples of their generation. Tomoko’s mother, not her father, was the boss at home. Although she did not have much memory, Tomoko knew that her mother ran a customer house before Tomoko was three years old. Tomoko’s mother made lots of money from her business and she was financially stronger than her husband even years after she quit her business. After quitting her business, Tomoko’s mother became a housewife. Although she did all the housework, she was still in charge of the family. Tomoko’s father worked as a city clerk. After he retired, Tomoko’s mother started asking him to do housework and grocery shopping. Tomoko’s father never objected and he would do whatever his wife asked him to.

Tomoko’s mother always told her that education and work were very important for a woman. She also taught Tomoko the importance of equality in marriage. Yet, Tomoko felt confused about her mother’s attitudes because she still treated Tomoko’s brother with privilege. “My mother loved my brother so much, she didn’t let him do any housework so she always did everything for him, not for girls. So even though my mother said I should get
good education, work and be equal, but at home my mother was always protecting my 
brother and let me and my sister do housework, like doing dishes.”

Tomoko and her brother both went to university in Tokyo and they lived together for 
four years. Among that time, Tomoko had to do all the housework, including cleaning her 
brother’s room and doing his laundry. Her brother never did anything. He expected Tomoko 
to take care of everything because she was a woman. Tomoko became very angry about her 
brother’s attitudes, especially watching her brother watching TV all the time and failing 
university twice. She did not think it was right. She did not think men should treat women 
like that. Tomoko could not say anything to her brother because he was her elder and she 
had to treat him with respect based on their culture. Tomoko did complain to her mother 
about her brother’s behaviours and her mother was always understanding and supportive. 
However, Tomoko’s brother would not change much and Tomoko always ended up doing all 
the housework. After they graduated from university and returned to their hometown, 
Tomoko was fed up with her brother and did not want to do anything for him anymore. She 
blamed her mother, “It’s your fault that he was so lazy.” Tomoko also told herself that “I 
ever wanted to marry a person who doesn’t treat women right...I am not gonna marry a guy 
like my brother.” She believed that some younger Japanese men would have a more equal 
mentality and that was what she wanted in her future husband.

Tomoko was frustrated that she still could not speak English fluently even after 
majoring in English. She decided to come to Canada and study English. Before Tomoko left 
her hometown to attend university, her parents asked her to return home after she graduated. 
This time, they also asked her to promise that she would come back to them. Tomoko 
promised. Her plan took a different turn. Tomoko met Tom and fell in love with him in
Vancouver. Tom was the first man Tomoko was ever attracted to and the passion was irresistible. She went back to Japan after she finished her ESL course but her heart was left in Canada. Tomoko applied for a working holiday visa and came back to Canada as soon as she could. She first found a job in a traveling agency and she later began to work for Tom when he started his own business. They also started living together. A year later, Tomoko's working holiday visa expired and she had no choice but to leave Canada again. Tom was indecisive about their relationship. He was worried about the responsibility after marriage and he was not ready to make a commitment. Tomoko went back to Japan and started teaching English in a private school. The separation made their relationship even stronger. “Because maybe we were away, our feeling got stronger, [and] stronger.” Tomoko missed Tom a lot and she was always sad. She flew to Vancouver a few times but each time the separation became harder and harder to bear. Finally Tom could not take it any more and he proposed to Tomoko on the phone and asked her to come back.

Tomoko’s parents were very upset when they learned that Tomoko wanted to marry a Canadian man and move to Canada. They did not want her to leave them and they did not approve of her marriage with a non-Japanese man. They did not want to have any grandchildren who would not have pure Japanese blood. Tomoko knew that her parents felt ashamed that their daughter was going to marry a Caucasian man because of the historical background in her hometown. “If you are dating with American guys, people think you are a slut or people look down on you...because there are so many sad stories.” “My father told me that I won’t be able to tell anybody I married to a Caucasian.”

For an entire year, Tomoko tried to convince her parents. Tom also flew to Japan to visit Tomoko’s parents and tried to gain their approval, but they would not change their
mind. That whole year, Tomoko lived under tremendous stress and her life was falling apart. “I was at the point [that] I just couldn’t take it any longer. I was so sick. I just couldn’t eat at home. I couldn’t work...so I said, ‘That’s it! I just have to go otherwise I am gonna die.’” Tom helped her to obtain a visa as his fiancé and the visa would expire soon. Tomoko could no longer wait. She packed and left. She has not spoken with her parents since. Until this day, Tomoko’s parents still have not forgiven her. Tomoko wanted to write or phone them but she could not. “Unless they call me”. She tried to deal with her loss by putting it aside and not to think about it, “otherwise I would cry all the time.” During the interview, Tomoko could not stop crying when she started talking about her parents. Tomoko’s sister flew to Vancouver to see her a few times and she told Tomoko that their parents were a bit more relaxed about her marriage but they were still not ready to talk to her. Tomoko could only wait for her sister to send her an OK signal so she could take her daughter back to Japan to visit her parents.

One month after arriving in Canada, Tomoko married Tom. Within a few months, she found a job in a Japanese retail store. Tomoko and Tom started building a life together and Tom’s parents provided them great support. After their baby girl arrived, Tomoko took one and half year maternity leave from work and became a full-time mother. Recently Tomoko returned to work on weekends and Tom took care of their baby while she was working. In a typical day, their family got up around 8:00 am. Tom walked the dog after breakfast while Tomoko cleaned up the kitchen and fed their baby. Tom went to work around 11:00 am and came home around supper time. Tomoko cooked supper and then walked the dog after supper. When Tomoko was working, their roles reversed. Tom stayed home taking care of the baby, as well as cooking and cleaning the house. It was not like this
when Tomoko first returned to work. The house was always a mess when Tomoko came home from work and she would have to clean it up. "I complained a lot...then my husband realized that it's not fair so he does not do it anymore." When they still lived in an apartment, Tomoko did more housework but she did not mind because there was so little to be done. After they moved into a house, she noticed that the load of housework became much heavier. She started to ask Tom to do more housework and made sure that they had a clear division and an equal share of household responsibility.

In terms of finances, Tom is in charge of money and major financial decisions. They had a joint account and Tomoko had access to the money. Tomoko also had her own account where she kept all of her income. "That's my money." She felt good about having her own money because it gave her the freedom to spend when she wants to, and she could contribute financially when necessary. "I hate to ask people to give money, I mean the husband." Tom paid for all the expenses for the family and did not ask Tomoko to contribute. He encouraged Tomoko to save the money for a raining day. Tomoko felt that Tom had always been responsible as well as generous on money matters. Although Tom was a bigger spender between the two of them, he did not spend money on himself. He liked to spend money on his family.

Tomoko did not mind that Tom made all the major decisions because she did not feel comfortable making those decisions. Tomoko felt that she did not have enough experience in making financial decisions, nor did she have the language ability to understand important documents. She would rather have Tom be in charge. Besides, over the years she had learned that Tom was too stubborn to listen to her opinions. "He doesn't listen. From my experience, my husband wants to do something for himself, he decides and he wanted to do it
right away. He is obsessed with good ideas...I let him do it even though I think it may not work.” “Every time he spent some money and went down the drain, it’s OK. Better than to have somebody who is so cranky. I want him to do it and be satisfied. I think it’s less stressful for me.” Sometimes after he tried, Tom would admit, “OK, it did not work.”

When they were deciding on which house to buy, Tomoko thought the house Tom liked required too much work, but she agreed to it because she knew that Tom really liked it and she would not be able to change his mind. The first year was a disaster. Things constantly broke down and Tomoko had to do lots of heavy-duty cleaning. On top of that, their daughter started to wake up at night and they also had to take care of their homestay students. Tomoko often also had to hold the baby, push the stroller, walk the dog and do grocery shopping at the same time. It drove her crazy and she became resentful. Whenever Tomoko became stressed out, Tom would always try to reassure her that everything would be OK, and he tried to fix their house to make it as comfortable as possible. He also walked the dog more to relieve Tomoko from all the work. When things started to fall into place, Tomoko became appreciative of Tom’s decision to buy the house.

Their major conflict came from their different child-rearing styles. Tomoko was more protective and she set more limits on their daughter to prevent accidents. Tom believed that children should learn from their mistakes and he encouraged their daughter to explore and experiment. “I just want the safety of my child but he wants her to experiment. That’s a big gap. I don’t know it’s cultural or men and women...I hope he would understand me more, but I am stubborn, he is stubborn, we have big fights.” Their fight was always full-blown. They yelled at each other and slammed the door at each other. During the fights, nobody compromised. They threw words at each other like, “OK. You do whatever you
want.” or “Fine, I will do my way. You do your way.” Their fights usually come and go quickly. They usually patched up the next day. “We try to understand each other afterward because when we were having a fight, we just can’t cool off right away.” Unspoken, Tomoko and Tom made adjustments on their own after their fights. Now Tomoko lets their daughter experiment more and Tom has become more cautious about her safety. Another example was that when their daughter started waking up at night, Tomoko wanted to adopt the Western approach to let her cry out until she fell asleep. Tom disagreed because he felt sorry for their daughter. They had big fights about this issue and eventually Tom decided to get up at night and take care of their daughter. Tomoko was happy that she did not have to get up at night and they never fought about it ever since. Throughout the interview, Tomoko started to see that Tom seemed to make more adjustments than she did. “I am a little more stubborn in a way.”

One thing that bothered Tomoko was when they had different opinions about child-rearing, Tom often told her “because you are Japanese, you don’t understand.” This kind of comments made Tomoko feel that Tom did not understand her. “I hope he can understand that’s not my cultural background. [It is] myself, like my personal character.” She felt really hurt. “It makes me feel so bad. I wish I could go home, but I can’t...I wished I have never been married.” Tomoko also felt frustrated that she could not express herself well in English when she was upset. “He can always say what he wants but I have some frustration because I can not say or I can’t find the right word when you are arguing...I wish I could speak in Japanese and tell him what I want, but he does not speak any Japanese.”

Tom had tried to learn Japanese but he gave up. It did not bother Tomoko that Tom did not speak Japanese. “I have Japanese friends. If I want to talk, I can just call my friends.
And my work, I speak Japanese all the time.” Tomoko did not see language as an issue in their marriage and she did not think it gave Tom more power. In fact, she was glad that Tom’s English was better than hers that she could rely on him to understand important documents. In the first few years after coming to Canada, Tomoko expected herself to speak perfect English and she got frustrated with herself for still making mistakes. Sometimes she felt defeated because she could not participate in some conversations, like politics; sometimes she felt being discriminated against because she was an ESL speaker. For a long period of time, Tomoko felt like she was in a slump and she wanted to give up English. After years of struggle, she finally told herself, “It’s OK. You are not native, you won’t be able to speak like native…it’s OK if you make a mistake.” “People think my pronunciation is wrong, as long as you can communicate.” She started to be easier on herself. “I should be proud of being Japanese, like you shouldn’t be ashamed.” Sometimes when Tom used some words Tomoko did not understand, she would ask Tom to explain them, and it helped them to communicate.

Over time, their communication had improved. In the beginning, Tomoko was more reserved about her opinions and feelings. Influenced by the Japanese culture that silence is virtuous, Tomoko often kept her frustration to herself. Tom asked her to speak her mind otherwise he could not understand her. Little by little, Tomoko became more comfortable expressing her feelings. She realized that “[in] Western culture, you have to express yourself otherwise they have no comprehension. I learned it over the past years.” Tomoko felt that she had to adapt to Western Culture more and that Western culture is dominant in their household. They ate Western food more often and celebrated Western holidays. Tomoko perceived it as an inevitable situation because she lived here. “It’s not equal [but] because I
live here, it has to be.” “If he lived in Japan, maybe he would have to adopt it.” During the interview, Tomoko could hardly recall any conflicts they had over cultural differences. She did gain more appreciation for Japanese culture after coming to Canada. She felt that living in a multicultural society had stimulated her to make efforts to understand her own culture.

Sometimes Tomoko missed the exciting life style in Japan, but she really enjoyed the laid back life style in Canada. She liked the freedom she had in Canada. She felt that there was less social pressure and people, generally speaking, were less judgmental. She also believed that there was a higher level of gender equality in Canada and women experienced less discrimination, compared to Japan. She believed that it would be hard for her to find a job in Japan after she got married and had children. Yet, at the same time she found that living in a foreign country and speaking another language did limit her career development.

During the interview, Tomoko began to realize that living in Canada would give her the opportunity to go back to school and pursue a career in the future, which she would never get in Japan. “Like a second chance. You can have a second chance.” Living in Canada provided Tomoko the family life she wanted. Both she and her husband were involved in child-rearing and they spent lots time together as a family. She felt sorry for many Japanese families that the husband was always working and never got to spend time with the family. “I think it’s sad because the husband is not part of the raising kid. They miss lots of things.”

Overall Tomoko was satisfied with her marriage and life in Canada. She felt that she could keep a balance between family and work. Tomoko’s main complaint about Tom was that he was not neat enough. He walked on clean carpet with his dirty shoes on and he left his clothes all over the place. In her eyes, Tom was like a big kid who liked to play and to have fun. She liked that about him. She felt lucky that she and her husband had lots in
common, and he treated her well. "He understands me a lot because he let me go to work, he looks after my kid and he does a good job." Tomoko believed that the love between her and her husband was the key to their good relationship.
Table 9: Domains and Areas of Experiences in Tomoko’s Case

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Area of Experiences</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>1. Gender Role</td>
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<td>1-2. Gender role identity</td>
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<td>1-3. Gender role choice</td>
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<td>2. Finances and Decision-making</td>
<td>2-1. Financial ownership</td>
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<td>2-2. Financial autonomy</td>
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<td>2-3. Financial resource distribution</td>
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<td>2-6. Financial Decision-making power</td>
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<td>3. Culture and Language</td>
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<td>3-2. Linguistic adjustment</td>
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<td>4. Personal Power</td>
<td>4-1. Sense of personal power</td>
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Note: This table reflects the first step of analysis, which summarizes the participant’s specific area of experiences (right column). These experiences are grouped into four domains (left column).
Table 10: Categories and Factors Contributing to Tomoko’s Experiences

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Area of Experiences</th>
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<td>Gender role practice</td>
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<td>Gender role behaviours</td>
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<tr>
<td>B. Financial and Cultural</td>
<td>B-1. Employment</td>
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<td>Resources</td>
<td>B-2. Financial resources and contributions</td>
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<td>B-3. Social competence</td>
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<td>Linguistic power</td>
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<td>Linguistic adjustment</td>
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<tr>
<td>C. Socio-Cultural Factors</td>
<td>C-1. Social context</td>
<td>Gender role liberation</td>
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<td>C-2. Acculturation</td>
<td>Gender role behaviours</td>
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<td>D. Personal-Psychological</td>
<td>D-1. Cultural identity</td>
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<td>Factors</td>
<td>D-2. Personality</td>
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<td>Financial decision-making power</td>
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<td>D-3. Attribution and Interpretation</td>
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<tr>
<td>E. Husband’s Attitudes</td>
<td>E-1. Husband’s gender role attitudes</td>
<td>Gender role autonomy</td>
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<td>Gender role practice</td>
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<td>E-2. Husband’s financial attitudes</td>
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<td>Financial decision-making power</td>
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<td>E-3. Husband’s cultural attitudes</td>
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<td>Sense of personal power</td>
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<td>E-4. Husband’s conflict resolution attitudes</td>
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<td>Sense of personal power</td>
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<td>E-5. Husband’s emotional connections</td>
<td>Decision-making power</td>
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<td>Sense of personal power</td>
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Note: This table reflects the second step of analysis, which illustrates how a particular contributing factor (the second column) might have affected the participant's specific areas of experiences (the third column), as identified in the previous table. The contributing factors are grouped into five categories (the first column).
Analysis

This section identifies factors that might have affected Tomoko’s experiences related to issues of gender equality. Tomoko’s experiences are separated into four different domains and each domain contains various areas of experiences, as displayed in Table 9 (see Table 9). Factors contributing to Tomoko’s experiences are summarized into five categories and they are: (1) gender role beliefs, (2) financial and cultural resources, (3) socio-cultural factors, (4) personal-psychological factors, and (5) husband’s attitudes. Table 10 (see Table 10) displays how each factor might have contributed to Tomoko’s experiences in each area as discussed in the following:

Category A: Gender Role Beliefs

Two factors were identified in this category: (1) influences from early socialization, (2) new gender role awareness. In Tomoko’s case, her new gender role awareness was a continuum of the major influences from her early socialization and both factors seemed to have yielded similar effects on her experiences.

Factor A-1: Influences from Early Socialization. There were four major influences on Tomoko’s gender role beliefs from her upbringing. The first influence was her parents’ gender role practice. Based on Tomoko’s description, her parents’ gender roles went through transitions. When she was little, her mother was running her own business and was making more money than her father. Tomoko’s mother then quit her career and became a full-time housewife when Tomoko was three. At this time, Tomoko’s mother “did all the housework at home”. Another transition of her parents’ gender roles happened after Tomoko’s father retired. As Tomoko reported,
mother didn’t like shopping so my father drove and did shopping for her.

The second influence came from the power dynamic between Tomoko’s parents. Tomoko stated, “My mother is always stronger than my father,” and “My mother could tell my father what to do.” “Because when I was young, she was running a custom house, and she was earning more money than my father.” The third influence came from Tomoko’s mother’s gender role expectation of her. As Tomoko stated, “She told me that women should get education and to be equal with men.” The forth influence came from her mother’s differential treatment between boys and girls. Tomoko stated,

Sometimes it doesn’t make sense...My mother loved my brother so much, she didn’t let him do any housework, so she always did everything for him, not for girls. So even though my mother said I should get good education, work after that and be equal, but at home my mother was always protecting my bother, and let me and my sister do housework, like washing dishes, doing dishes.

These influences from Tomoko’s upbringing appeared to have affected her gender role expectations. Tomoko acknowledged that her mother’s influences had brought her the concept of gender equality at an early age. She said, “My mother influenced me a lot,” and “I always thought men and women should be equal.”

The early socialization process in Tomoko’s upbringing seemed to have affected her gender role identity and gender role choice, as illustrated in the following statements:

She told me to be educated and then work. I like that idea.

Even thought maybe he [my husband] is capable supporting us, I just want to work.

I always wanted to have kids. Even though I wanted to pursue my career, maybe I wouldn’t just choose job over family.

As a result, Tomoko chose to have a part-time job on the weekend and devoted most of her time in childrearing.

Factor A-2: New Gender Role Awareness. It appeared that the influences of
Tomoko’s upbringing had already brought her the concept of gender equality, but her experiences of living with her brother further enhanced her gender role awareness. Tomoko described,

*My brother was always a traditional one, and he always thought women should serve men all the time. I just didn’t like this idea even though when I was young.*

*In four years, he was really bad. He never cleaned his room. He never did dishes. He never did laundry, and that was my job, but it wasn’t fair. After that, I thought, “That’s not right. Men just can’t treat women like that.” So I always wanted to be treated equally with men. That four years changed me a lot.*

*I thought I was so busy and he being so lazy and staying home watching TV all the time, so why should I have to do like all the cooking, and cleaning, and everything? That four years changed me a lot.*

Tomoko’s new gender role awareness seems to have affected her gender role expectations. Tomoko’s gender role expectations were reflected in her statement that she wanted her husband to “share housework and raise the kids [together],” and “sometime he cooks and I can work, too.” Also, “I don’t want men to think that women should do all the housework because he supports [us].” “I don’t want my husband [to] say, ‘You should stay home’.” Tomoko identified how her experience living with her brother had affected her expectations of her future husband: “Watching my brother being so lazy and treated my so badly [made me think that] I am not gonna marry a guy like my brother - Just like obsession...I would not choose a man who would not treat women right.”

Tomoko’s new gender role awareness appeared to have affected the gender role practice between her and her husband. They both shared housework and childrearing responsibilities, as she said, “Because he is working five days a week, I do housework. But when I am working, he does housework.” Tomoko’s new gender role awareness also seemed to have affected her gender role behaviours. When perceiving inequality in sharing these
tasks, Tomoko took actions to change the situation, as illustrated below:

*At the beginning when I started working again, when I came home the house was a mess, and I complained a lot. Because I come home, I have to clean up all the kitchen, then my husband realized that it’s not fair so he doesn’t do it anymore.*

*He said, “Oh, I was so busy with the kid, and I was busy doing like cutting the grass or doing the housework, and preparing and stuff.” But I thought it was not fair when I come home I have to clean so now he doesn’t do that anymore. He does laundry now.*

**Category B: Financial and Cultural Resources**

Factors in this category included (1) employment, and (2) financial resources and contributions, (3) social competence, (4) cultural advantage, and (5) language resources.

**Factor B-1: Employment.** After coming to Canada, Tomoko found it difficult to find a good job due to the language barriers, as she described,

*If I had stayed in Japan, maybe I would have better job, I don’t know. This is the trouble living in another country and your language...English is not your mother tongue, and I could have earned more, or I could have pursued my career. I don’t know - maybe job-wise, I could have been better in Japan. But now I am in Canada, so job is not great, not satisfactory.*

Despite her frustration in her career development, Tomoko’s employment status appeared to have affected the *gender role practice* in her marriage, as she stated, “when I am working, he does housework.” Tomoko’s employment also had affected her financial resources and contributions, which is discussed in the next section.

**Factor B-2: Financial resources and contributions.** In terms of financial resources, Tomoko’s part-time job brought her certain income, but she was unable to maintain the same earning ability as she had in Japan. “Sometimes I wish I could have more money,” Tomoko said. In terms of her financial contributions, Tomoko stated,

*Sometimes I go shopping and pay with my money, and my husband, mostly he go shopping and do most groceries, but once in a while I go shopping and I buy grocery or buy stuff for her and things for myself.*
My money is mine but I am saving it for emergency, so if something happens, I can just give it to [my husband].

Tomoko’s financial resources and contributions appeared to have affected her sense of financial ownership over her own money, as reflected in her statements: “I work and work money is mine,” and “It’s OK for him to spend more money - not my money.” Tomoko did not seem to have a sense of financial ownership over her husband’s money, which was reflected in her words, such as “fine, it is your money,” and “it’s not my money,” while dealing with financial conflicts with her husband.

The following statements demonstrated how Tomoko’s financial resources had brought her financial autonomy. She stated that she had “more freedom” and,

I feel good because I hate to ask people to give money, I mean the husband. Some...some of my friends whose husbands control all the money, so she...everything she goes shopping, she asked for money, and I just don’t like that.

Because I have my own account, it feels better even I have less money in my account. Feels like I can buy whatever I want, when I want.

On the other hand, Tomoko’s limited financial resources seemed to have led her to restrain her financial decision-making power, as reflected in the following statements:

I don’t buy any big purchase so he usually is the one who decides...I think I let him [make those decisions].

Of course financially he is the guy so he has to make decisions like for educational support.

But sometimes I feel like “Oh, he shouldn’t spend that much money on it,” but he doesn’t listen probably if I say no. “That’s O.K. It’s your money.”...Because I don’t earn as much money, it’s O.K. for him to spend more money - not my money...Because his job is...he owns a shop. He has more stress than I do.

Factor B-3: Social competence. Tomoko’s social competence was reflected in her ability to expand her network and to find a job, as she said, “I met lots of new friends and I
got a job.” Tomoko’s social competency appeared to have affected her sense of personal power, as the following statement suggested:

Sometimes you meet somebody in Japan and come here and you have no friends, you have no relatives, you only know that boyfriend, I think you shouldn’t rush to marry right away because after that you feel so lonely. I was lucky I came here before, I knew the city, I knew some friends.

Factor B-4: Cultural advantage. Tomoko identified her loss of her own cultural advantage as an immigrant in terms of the maintenance of her own culture legacy. “If you are not there, you tend to forget celebration. You just don’t have anything to celebrate [certain holidays].” The cultural advantage factor appeared to have affected the level of cultural adjustment between Tomoko and Tom. Tomoko stated that the Western culture was the dominating culture in their household “because we celebrate all the holidays,” and “because I live in Canada, our household is all westernized.” Tomoko recognized that being a foreign wife, she inevitably had to make more cultural adjustments. She said, “It’s is unequal but it is the way it has to be,” and “If he lived in Japan, maybe he would have adopted it but because I live here, I adopt more.”

Factor B-5: Language resources. The following statement portrayed the language barriers Tomoko experienced as an ESL speaker:

You can’t express or you can’t say...Sometimes they talk about like news or economy, I just can’t say anything, but maybe in Japanese I could say something.

Sometimes I feel like people look down on you because your English is not good enough, or like maybe they think I am childish because of my speaking.

Tomoko identified that language barriers had influenced her financial decision-making power in the sense that it decreased her decision-making capacity. She stated, 

He can make decisions because some legal documents or things like that I maybe wouldn’t understand completely so I have to leave it to my husband because he understands everything...I always depends on my husband because my English is not
good enough.

It appeared that Tomoko’s language barriers had affected her linguistic power to a certain degree, as illustrated in the following:

*Just that time I get so emotional and words don’t come out easily.*

*I can not express myself well in English because I am so upset and I am so emotional, and he can always say what he wants but I have some frustration because I can not say or I can’t find the right word when you are arguing.*

However, Tomoko was not sure whether the language resources really had any impact on the power dynamic between her and her husband. On one hand, she wondered, “Maybe if I can speak perfect English, that makes our relationship equal, but...” On the other hand, she did not think that her husband had more linguistic power than her despite of his language advantage. She said, “I don’t think so [that he had more power in language],” and “we can argue equally.”

The fact that English was the only language in Tomoko and Tom’s communication appeared to have predisposed Tomoko to make more linguistic adjustments.

**Category C: Socio-Cultural Factors**

Two factors were identified under this category: (1) social context, and (2) acculturation.

**Factor C-1: Social context.** Tomoko compared the social context she perceived of Japan and Canada in the following statements:

*In Japan if you have a job in a company - some women have a job only to serve tea and do copies and men never do...There is a little discrimination in the companies...I didn’t like that.*

*[In Japan], you are capable but the society sometimes does not accept because you are a woman.*

*In Canada, men and women [are] more equal.*
Wow, Canada is maybe easy to live for me because I don’t like to be discriminated.

It seemed that the social context of Canada had brought Tomoko certain degree of gender role liberation, which was reflected in her experiences as a woman in both countries.

[In Japan], at first I was teaching, plus I was a receptionist in the beginning, so I have to serve men or guest, like parents came to visit, I have to serve some tea or coffee, but that wasn’t men’s job. It was women’s job.

[In Canada], when I was working in the travel agency, it was like everybody did our own copy, and helped break then even everybody has a duty, like they share duties, like unloading dishwasher in the morning, and men and women both did.

Factor C-2: Acculturation. It appeared that the acculturation process Tomoko went through had certain effects on her gender role behaviours and the gender role practice between her and her husband. Based on Tomoko’s description, she had become more assertive in expressing her frustration and it eventually led her husband to contribute more in the household and childrearing responsibilities. Tomoko’s changes were displayed in the following:

Before, I was quieter. I mean if I had complaints, I never told him because maybe it’s Japanese culture... That’s our concept in Japan. Be quiet, even though you have little complain, they just stay in yourself;

Because it’s like Asian culture, I am not sure. Maybe in Japan, we have a word, “ishin-denshin” that means even if you are not talking, you can understand your family or your close friends. You feel it and understand it. But this is probably Asian culture. [In] Canadian culture or European culture, or Western culture, you have to express yourself, otherwise they have no comprehension. So I learned it over the last years.

Category D: Personal-Psychological Factors

Factors in this category included: (1) cultural identity, (2) personality, and (3) attribution and interpretation.

Factor D-1: Cultural identity. Tomoko’s cultural identity was reflected in the
Now I work, I meet lots of different people from different countries, and students. It's very international, so I understand more other cultures. There are some influence on me, and plus I learn about Japan because I go back to history and I learn more. I always get some stimulation by other people. I feel like more learning, like more studying. I think I like to learn more about history and I will learn about religion, so I would like to understand people. Maybe it didn't happen in Japan because when we live in Japan, everybody is Japanese.

Here is more like multicultural. It stimulates so [it] changes the aspect of looking people.

Tomoko’s cultural identity appeared to have brought her self-acceptance of her language limitations, as she stated, “I just realized that I can not be perfect, like speaking English. I should be proud of being Japanese, like you shouldn’t be shamed.” The following two statements further illustrated the changes in Tomoko’s attitude toward her language competency:

Because I learn English for so many years, because I just keeping mistakes, mistakes, so I was in - what do you call that - slump? And then for a long period of time I was just like, 'Uh, I should give up in English. I would never be able to speak perfect English.'

But I realized it’s O.K. You are not native, you won’t be able to speak like native. So I just told myself, 'it's O.K. if you make a mistake, [or] people think my English pronunciation is wrong, as long as you communicate.' I start thinking more easily. So now I don’t feel so much stress, ‘Oh, my English is so bad,’ as long as my husband understands. I can not be perfect like native speaker. It’s impossible because my muscle don’t work. It’s impossible.”

In my opinion, Tomoko’s self acceptance of her language ability seemed to have increased her sense of personal power, which somehow defused her husband’s ascribed linguistic power. It also made the English language a communication, rather than a power medium. Tomoko’s sense of personal power was reflected in her response that “I just ask him,” and “I don’t feel anything” when her husband used words she did not understand.

Also, “If I am clam and I talk to my husband even thought I make mistakes, he understands
so I don’t feel any trouble...as long as you communicate.”

Factor D-2: Personality. Tomoko described herself as “strong” and “stubborn”. She said, “I spoke up a little bit in Japan.” She also noticed that after becoming a mother, “something shifted and I am a little stronger than before.” Tomoko’s strong and assertive personality traits were observed in her confrontation with her mother about her brother: “So then I told my mother, ‘It’s your fault that he was so lazy, and I did everything for him for the last four years, and I am not gonna have anything to do with him anymore.’.” It was also reflected in her determination in pursuing love regardless of her parents’ opposition, as she said, “That’s it. I just have to go.”

Tomoko’s assertiveness appeared to have affected her gender role practice in that she expressed her frustration of her husband’s housework performance and negotiated for a higher level of equality.

Tomoko’s personality also seemed to have affected her gender role behaviours as well as her sense of personal power, which was displayed in how she dealt with the conflicts between her and her husband. Tomoko stated that during the course of a conflict with her husband, she would not back down from it and “we just slam the door on each other.” “I am stubborn, he is stubborn. We have big fights.” “He said, ‘O.K., you do whatever you want,’ so I said, ‘Oh, fine, I will do my way, you do your way.’ So it doesn’t compromise.” In terms of resolving their differences, Tomoko stated that her husband often made changes after their arguments, but she would not necessarily make changes herself. She said, “I am a little bit stubborn in a way...Sometimes I think I am stronger than my husband.”

However, despite her declaration of being stubborn, Tomoko also displayed the willingness to make adjustments while dealing with their marital conflicts. She said,
“Sometimes I try to let her (the baby) do more experiments,” and “I try to understand my husband so I would let her do more things I don’t want to before.”

Tomoko also identified that there was an “easy-going” side of her, and it seemed to have affected her attitude in the financial decision-making process. She said, “I let him do it. We don’t have big arguments when he wants to do a big project…That way I am easy-going.” Tomoko’s personality also seemed to have affected her financial decision-making power, as she said, “I can’t make a big decision personally. [It’s] like my character. I am just not leadership type of person…I have never made big decision in my life, I mean with money.”

Factor D-3: Attribution and Interpretation. The following statements illustrated how Tomoko interpreted the obstacles in her career development and her gender role. She said, 

[In Japan] I may not be able to work because it’s hard to get a job when you are over 30, especially with a kid…Right now I think it’s not a loss, probably it’s a gain…I feel lucky…In the future maybe I could go back to school, maybe I could have a better job after she is like five or six. I can’t do that in Japan, like you can not go back to school. [it is] like a second chance. You can have a second chance.

Before when I...before I had a kid, uh...I thought I should pursue my career and get a better job, but now we have something more valuable than I...I am satisfied with my situation right now.

Although it was not stated clearly in the interview, it seemed that Tomoko’s interpretation had helped her cope with the loss of her career development and accept her current gender role, which might have helped her maintain a sense of worth and a sense of personal power.

Category E: Husband’s attitudes

This category consisted of the following factors: (1) husband’s gender role attitudes, (2) husband’s financial attitudes, (3) husband’s cultural attitudes, (4) husband’s conflict
resolution attitudes, and (5) husband’s emotional connections.

Factor E-1: Husband’s gender role attitudes. Tom’s gender role attitudes appeared to have affected Tomoko’s gender role autonomy, as she stated, “He understands me a lot because he lets me go to work.” Tom’s gender role attitudes were also found to have influenced the gender role practice in their marriage, as Tomoko described,

*He supports me, and he takes care of my daughter when I am working, he works five days a week, plus he looks after my kid for two days.*

*He looks after my kid, and he does a good job, and also sometimes he does cooking, and he offers to do the dishes. When I am tired, even though it’s my duty to walk my dog in the evening, he sometimes does it for me.*

*He takes of my daughter while I am working. Usually he gives her a bath or watches TV, plays with her, and sometimes he puts her down*.

*And the days I work my husband drives me to work, and he usually goes shopping after that and then comes home and does a little housework like feeding kids, cleaning up, unloading dishwasher. Recently he does laundry, but before he never did. Last two times I was working, he said, “Oh, I will do the laundry today.” Then he cooks dinner for us, so when I come home, dinner is ready.*

Factor E-2: Husband’s financial attitudes. Tomoko described Tom’s financial attitudes as the following:

*If I ask him to buy something for myself... He likes to spend so in that case, he is not cheap. He knows that if I need something, because I don’t have too much money so he can buy me... If I have to buy like a car, maybe he would probably buy me a car.*

It appeared that Tom’s financial attitudes had provided Tomoko financial autonomy. Tomoko said, “No, he has [our] joint account but he doesn’t have a private [one], but I have my own.” Tomoko also stated that Tom did not ask her to contribute financially even though she had income: “He said I am a better saver so I should save my money.”

Tom’s financial attitudes also seemed to have influenced the financial resource distribution between the two of them, as Tomoko reported,
And of course with something like car or big thing, he paid, he paid, he paid anything.

He doesn’t spend so much money on himself. He spends money on her, for the house...He likes to spend on other things, like for both of us,

Just I complained a little bit about walking the dog, doing the laundry in the common laundry room in the basement, and there was not enough space for the dog ...so he said, “O.K., I will buy you a house so everything will be easier.”

Tom’s decision-making attitude was portrayed in Tomoko’s following statements:

If I want to take her to Japanese school, he won’t say no. If I want to put her into piano lesson or any other kind, he probably says nothing because he probably let me handle this type of stuff.

[In terms of major financial decision-making], mostly my husband [decides], but I don’t buy any big purchase so I don’t purchase big items so he usually is the one who decides.

Impulsive, impulsive. So he goes, “Oh, why don’t we do this?” and then sometimes I say, “Maybe you shouldn’t do it.” But he is so obsessed with good idea, he wants to do it.

It seemed that Tom’s financial attitudes also had affected Tomoko’s financial decision-making power in that Tomoko often gave in because of Tom’s attitudes, as she said,

I think I let him [make decisions] because he doesn’t listen [and] because he sometimes [is] so strong-minded.

So I let him do it, and even though I think it may not work, but he does it, and he says, “O.K., it didn’t work.”

Better than to have somebody who is so cranky, and “I should have done it. I should have done it.” I want him to do it and be satisfied. I think that’s less stress for me, too.

But buying a house...at first I thought this place is lots of work to do [and] maybe it’s not a good time to buy a house, but I knew he really liked it, and he is not gonna maybe listen to me, so I said, “O.K., if you really want this house, we can buy it.

Factor E-3: Husband’s Cultural attitudes. Tomoko described Tom’s culture attitudes as “generally he does respect my cultural”, but she also pointed out, “The one thing I don’t
like is he always says, ‘Because you are Japanese, you don’t understand.’.” Tom’s cultural attitudes appeared to have decreased Tomoko’s sense of personal power, which was displayed in Tomoko’s reaction to his comments:

That’s what I hate, and I said, “Oh, I wish I could go back to Japan.” What he said makes me feel so bad. I wish I could go home but I can’t. So that makes me really really, “Gees, I wish I could speak in Japanese and tell him what I want.”...I think he should respect my background more.

Tom’s cultural attitudes were also reflected in his efforts in making cultural and linguistic adjustments. One example was when Tomoko pointed out Tom’s culturally inappropriate behaviours, he “got mad because I told him it’s rude.” Yet, afterwards, “I don’t think he does it anymore. I guess he changes a bit,” said Tomoko. Tom’s cultural attitudes were also displayed in his effort to learn Japanese. As Tomoko stated, “he tried but he gave up.” Tom’s inability to speak Japanese had increased Tomoko responsibility in making linguistic adjustment.

Factor E-4: Husband’s conflict resolution attitudes. Tom’s attitudes in dealing with conflicts seemed to have enhanced Tomoko’s sense of personal power as well as her actual decision-making power in some areas because Tomoko was able to influence the outcome of their decisions after their conflict occurred. Tomoko stated,

He told me to speak up. He wouldn’t understand what I feel unless I talk. So now I can tell [him] how I feel, but before I just couldn’t.

Because of my husband, I am getting used to express myself, but still not perfect. Like he always tells me, “What do you feel?” “What do you think?” But it was so difficult for me to express myself. I wasn’t able to do that in Japan.

My husband said, “OK, I was wrong,” so now he understood he shouldn’t have let her do it.

I wanted to do the Western way. I wanted to leave her in the crib to let her cry, but my husband was the opposite. He wanted to bring her to our room and then we started to have big argument at night, just leave her there or pick her up. We always fought,
and when we moved here my husband decided to go and get her so most of the night he woke up and picked her up.

Factor E-5: Husband’s emotional connections. Tom’s emotional connections were displayed in his understanding of Tomoko. Tomoko stated “My husband understands me a lot.” “He treated me well. If somebody doesn’t love his spouse, maybe they don’t treat them right.” Tomoko also said that after each conflict, “we try to understand each other afterwards.” Tom’s emotional understanding of Tomoko was also displayed in his effort to make Tomoko feel comfortable in the house he purchased: “I thought this place is lots of work to do... He did lots of work. He changed lots of things. He makes things better. He tells me, ‘it’s gonna be OK.’” After our initial interview, Tom sold the house and bought a house that Tomoko liked. Tom’s emotional understanding of Tomoko seemed to have brought Tomoko a sense of personal power, as well as some actual decision-making power which was reflected in Tomoko’s happy laughter “Hah! Hah!” while announcing that Tom had sold the house she hated and bought her a new house.

Summary

In the gender role domain, the influences from Tomoko’s early socialization appeared to have shaped her gender role identity and choice, as well as her initiation gender role expectations of equality; her new gender role awareness further constructed her gender role expectations. Tomoko’s gender role practice seemed to be influenced by the combination of her new gender role awareness, employment, and Tom’s gender role attitudes. Both Tomoko’s personality and the acculturation process appeared to have contributed to her assertiveness and led her to engage Tom in the negotiation of more gender equality, which eventually increased Tom’s contributions in the household tasks. Tom’s gender role attitudes appeared to have provided Tomoko gender role autonomy; the Canadian social context
seemed to have brought her a certain degree of gender role liberation.

In the finances and decision-making domain, Tom showed the willingness to be the sole provider and shared his financial resources, which appeared to have provided Tomoko certain financial autonomy. Yet, his attitude in making financial decisions pressured Tomoko to compromise, and therefore somehow decreased her financial decision-making power. Tomoko’s language barriers and personality also seemed to have made her defer her financial decision-making power. Having her own income increased Tomoko’s financial autonomy. Tom’s willingness to make adjustments after conflicts as well as his emotional understanding of Tomoko appeared to have given her the capacity to influence the decision outcomes.

In the culture and language domain, English being the only language spoken in the marriage increased Tomoko’s responsibilities in making linguistic adjustments and decreased her linguistic power; being a foreign also increased her level of cultural adjustment.

In the personal power domain, Tom’s lack of cultural sensitivities often hurt Tomoko’s feelings and somehow affected her sense of personal power, but her sense of personal power appeared to be enhanced through some other avenues: Tomoko’s social competence seemed to have brought her personal independence; her cultural identity appeared to have helped her accept her language limitation; her attribution and interpretation of her career changes seemed to have brought her self-acceptance of her gender role; her personality appeared to have sustained her in the process of conflict; her husband’s willingness to make changes after their conflicts and his understanding of her seemed to have provided her the capacity to make a difference in dealing with their conflicts. Together, these elements seemed to have increased Tomoko’s sense of personal power.
CHAPTER V: CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS

In this chapter, a cross-case comparison is made to identify how each factor might have affected the participants’ experiences in certain areas. As clarified in Chapter III: Methodology, two major steps are involved in the data analysis procedure. The first step is to identify participants’ experiences related to gender equality issues based on the collected data. Eventually, the participants’ experiences are grouped into four domains: (1) gender role, (2) finances and decision-making, (3) culture and language, and (4) personal power. Each domain consists of certain specific areas of experiences and these experiences vary from one participant to another. The second step is to further identify the underlying factors that might have contributed to the participants’ experiences in each area. The objective of the cross-case analysis is to further compare how each factor might have affected the participants’ experiences in each area across all five cases, and then categorize these factors into common categories.

However, five common categories of contributing factors have already emerged during the single-case analysis process, the cross-case comparison in this chapter is structured under these five common categories. The five common categories are: (A) gender role beliefs, (B) financial and culture resources, (C) socio-cultural factors, (D) personal-psychological factors, and (E) husband’s attitudes.

Cross-Case Comparison

Category A: Gender Role Beliefs

Two factors are identified in this category, and their possible effects on the participant’s experiences are displayed in the following as well as in Table 11 (see Table 11).

Factor A-1: Influences from early socialization
Gender role expectations: Akiko, Miki, Sayuri, Tomoko
Gender role identity: Akiko, Miki, Sayuri, Tomoko
Gender role choice: Akiko, Miki, Sayuri, Tomoko
Gender role practice: Akiko, Hiromi, Miki
Gender role behaviours: Akiko, Miki

Factor A-2: New gender role awareness
Gender role expectations: Akiko, Hiromi, Miki, Sayuri, Tomoko
Gender role identity: Hiromi, Miki
Gender role choice: Hiromi
Gender role practice: Hiromi, Sayuri, Tomoko
Gender role behaviours: Akiko, Hiromi, Tomoko

Table 11: Category A - Gender Role Beliefs and Their Possible Effects

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<th>Factor</th>
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<td>A-2. New gender role</td>
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Note 1: The abbreviations are: A: Akiko; H: Hiromi; M: Miki; S: Sayuri; T: Tomoko
Note 2: The presence of the "*" sign in a cell indicates a factor has contributed to a certain area of experience for that particular participant.

In all five cases, participants experienced some changes in their gender role beliefs. The other four participants, except Miki, had already acquired certain new gender role awareness before they entered their marriage; Miki’s gender role awareness occurred after she had left her husband.

The gaining of new gender role awareness seemed to have affected all five participant’s gender role expectations and they desired an equal relationship in marriage. The influences from early socialization appeared to have different degrees of impact on Akiko, Miki and Sayuri’s gender role expectations.
For Akiko, although her new gender role awareness appeared to have brought her the expectations of gender equality, she still had certain gender role expectations that were rooted in the influences of her early socialization. For Miki, before she left her husband, her gender role expectations appeared to be dominated by the influences of her early socialization. For Hiromi who had acquired some gender role awareness at a young age, her gender role expectations seemed to be mainly guided by her awareness. For Sayuri, her new gender role awareness seemed to have led to some major changes in her gender role expectations. Yet, her expectations of her husband to be the provider seemed to be the result from early socialization influences. For Tomoko, the influences from her early socialization appeared to have already brought her the expectation of gender equality, and her new gender role awareness seemed to have further affirmed her expectations.

In four cases, the influences from the participants' early socialization, especially their parents' gender role expectations of them seemed to have affected their gender role identity and gender role choices. The only exception was Hiromi. It seemed that Hiromi's gender role identity and choice were mainly influenced by her new gender role awareness, and they were very different from what her parents' gender role expectations of her were. In Akiko's case, since the messages from her early socialization were inconsistent, Akiko's gender role identity appeared to be ambivalent and it seemed to have affected her gender role choice. In Miki's case, the gaining of new gender role awareness appeared to have somehow changed the gender role identity she acquired through her early socialization.

Participants' new gender role awareness seemed to be a dominated factors contributing to gender role practice in three cases – Hiromi claimed to have consciously divided the housework equally with her husband; Sayuri stated that her husband shared
financial responsibility and housework together; Tomoko reported that she and her husband had alternated their responsibilities among work, household and childrearing.

The influences from the participants' early socialization appeared to have affected their gender role practice in three cases. Both Akiko and Hiromi reported to be driven by their old gender role ideology to take on more responsibilities in household tasks despite of their awareness of gender equality. Miki identified that her gender role practice resulted from her upbringing influences.

In four cases, participants new gender role awareness appeared to have affected their gender role behaviours, which were reflected in their interactions with their husband. Akiko, Hiromi and Tomoko seemed to be vigilant about the level of equality in their marriage and had engaged their husbands in the negotiation for a higher level of equality. Sayuri appeared to have placed herself in an equal position with her husband and was also vigilant about her own contributions. The influences from early socialization appeared to have affected two participants' gender role behaviours. Both Akiko and Miki identified that they had suppressed or sacrificed their needs to satisfy their husband's needs. It is important to note that this conclusion was based on the particular behaviours the participants mentioned in the interview. It may not represent the participant's overall behaviour patterns.

Category B: Financial and Cultural Resources

Five factors were identified in this category and their possible effects on the participant's experiences are displayed in the following as well as in Table 12 (see Table 12).

Factor B-1: Employment
   Gender role choice: Akiko
   Gender role practice: Akiko, Hiromi, Miki, Sayuri, Tomoko

Factor B-2: Financial resources and contribution
   Gender role practice: Akiko, Hiromi
Financial ownership: Akiko, Miki, Sayuri, Tomoko
Financial autonomy: Akiko, Hiromi, Miki, Sayuri, Tomoko
Financial decision-making power: Akiko, Miki, Tomoko
Sense of personal power: Akiko

Factor B-3: Social competence
Sense of personal power: Hiromi, Miki, Sayuri, Tomoko

Factor B-4: Cultural advantage
Cultural adjustment: Akiko, Hiromi, Tomoko

Factor B-5: Language resources
Linguistic adjustment: Akiko, Hiromi, Miki, Sayuri, Tomoko
Linguistic power: Akiko, Hiromi, Miki, Sayuri, Tomoko
Decision-making power: Miki, Tomoko
Sense of personal power: Akiko

Table 12: Category B - Financial and Cultural Resources and Their Possible Effects

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<th>Factor</th>
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<td>Sense of personal power</td>
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Note 1: The abbreviations are: A: Akiko; H: Hiromi; M: Miki; S: Sayuri; T: Tomoko
Note 2: The presence of the "*" sign in a cell indicates a factor has contributed to a certain area of experience for that particular participant.

The participants' employment appeared to have affected the participant's gender role practice in all five cases. For Hiromi, Sayuri, and Tomoko, their work status seemed to have increased their husband's contributions in household and childrearing tasks. Both Akiko and
Hiromi who were not employed at the time of the interview reported that they were responsible for most of the household and childrearing tasks. Akiko also identified that her employment status at the time of her pregnancy had contributed to her gender role choice.

Financial resources and contribution seemed to have affected two participants’ gender role practice. Akiko and Hiromi both reported that their lack of financial resources and contribution had brought them a sense of obligation within them and led them to take on more household responsibilities.

Financial resources also seemed to be associated with the participant’s sense of financial ownership in four cases, with the exception of Hiromi’s case. Hiromi displayed a sense of entitlement over her husband’s income for the compromises she had made to assist his career. Akiko reported not to have any sense of financial ownership for the complete absence of her own financial resources. Miki, Sayuri, and Tomoko exhibited a sense of financial ownership over their own money but not over their husband’s money.

It appeared that financial resources and contribution had affected the participants’ financial autonomy in all five cases. Akiko, Hiromi, and Miki seemed to have limited their financial autonomy for being financially dependent. Miki, Sayuri, and Tomoko all experienced a certain degree of financial freedom by having their own money to spend.

Financial resources and contributions seemed to have contributed to three of the participants’ financial decision-making power. Akiko, Miki, and Tomoko reported to have limited their own financial decision-making power for being financially dependent. Hiromi claimed to have financial decision-making power despite not having her own income. It was unclear whether Sayuri’s financial resources and contribution had affected her financial decision-making power.
It seemed that the lack of financial resources and contributions affected Akiko's sense of personal power. Yet, the lack of financial resources and contributions did not seem to have affected Hiromi and Miki's sense of power. Hiromi exhibited a deserving attitude over her husband's financial resources and she also reported that she did not feel that she had less power although she did not have income; Miki perceived herself to have more power than her husband because she was in charge of the money, despite still being financially dependent.

Participants' social competence, such as their familiarity of the Canadian society and their ability to access social resources, appeared to have increased their sense of personal power, except Akiko. Hiromi, Sayuri and Tomoko all recognized their social competence and attributed it to the level of equality in the marriage. Hiromi appeared to have benefited from her social competence.

Participants' cultural resources seemed to have affected the level of cultural adjustment between them and their husbands in four cases. Akiko, Hiromi, and Tomoko all experienced certain pressure to adapt to their husband's culture since their husband's culture was the dominant culture in their marriage. In Sayuri's marriage, her culture was more dominate than her husband's culture and her husband was making more adjustments than she did. Miki reported her husband was making more efforts than she in terms of cultural adjustments due to his interest in Japanese culture.

Language resources appeared to have affected the level of linguistic adjustment between the participants and their husbands. Other than Sayuri, the other four participants reported to have been predisposed to make more linguistic adjustments because English was the primary language in their marriage. In Sayuri's marriage, Japanese, rather than her
husband’s native language, was the primary language and her husband was found to have made more linguistic adjustment efforts.

It also seemed that the language resources had affected the level of linguistic power between the participants and their husbands. Akiko, Hiromi, Miki, and Tomoko all experienced obstacles in expressing themselves in arguments with their husbands. Both Hiromi and Sayuri reported to have more linguistic power than her husband when the Japanese language was used.

Two participants, Miki and Tomoko, indicated that the language resources had affected their decision-making power. Miki reported that arguing in English was too stressful so she often gave in during the decision-making process. Tomoko stated that the language barriers had limited her ability to understand important documents so she often deferred her financial decision-making power to her husband.

The language resources seemed to have affected Akiko’s sense of personal power. Akiko’s language barriers contributed to her personal identity crises and decreased social competence.

**Category C: Socio-Cultural Factors**

Two factors were identified in this category and their possible effects on the participant’s experiences are displayed in the following as well as in Table 13 (see Table 13).

**Factor C-1: Social Context**
- Gender role liberation: Hiromi, Miki, Sayuri, Tomoko

**Factor C-2: Acculturation**
- Gender role expectations: Akiko, Miki
- Gender role behaviours: Akiko, Hiromi, Miki, Tomoko
- Gender role practice: Tomoko
Table 13: Category C – Socio-Cultural Factors and Their Possible Effects

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<th>Factor</th>
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<td>Gender role practice</td>
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Note 1: The abbreviations are: A: Akiko; H: Hiromi; M: Miki; S: Sayuri; T: Tomoko
Note 2: The presence of the "*" sign in a cell indicates a factor has contributed to a certain area of experience for that particular participant.

Four participants, except Akiko, identified that the North American social context had brought them a certain degree of gender role liberation and they experienced more freedom as a woman in North America.

The acculturation process appeared to have changed two participants’ gender role expectations. Akiko stated that as she became more familiar with Canadian society, her gender role expectations increased and she was no longer satisfied with a superficial level of equality. Miki experienced changes in her gender role beliefs in the acculturation process, which contributed to the changes of her gender role expectations.

Four participants identified that acculturation had changed their behaviours. Hiromi, Miki, and Tomoko reported to have become more assertive in the process of acculturation. Tomoko’s assertiveness was found to have changed her husband’s gender role practice.

Category D: Personal-Psychological Factors

Nine factors were identified in this category, and their possible effects on the participant’s experiences are displayed in the following as well as in Table 14 (see Table 14).

Factor D-1: Self-identity
   Gender role identity: Akiko
   Gender role choice: Akiko

Factor D-2: Cultural identity
   Gender role identity: Akiko
Gender role choice: Akiko
Sense of personal power: Miki, Sayuri, Tomoko

**Factor D-3: Personality**
Gender role expectations: Akiko
Gender role identity: Akiko, Sayuri
Gender role choice: Sayuri
Gender role behaviours: Akiko, Hiromi, Miki, Sayuri, Tomoko
Gender role practice: Akiko, Miki, Tomoko
Involvement in financial decision-making: Miki, Tomoko
Financial decision-making power: Miki, Tomoko
Sense of personal power: Akiko, Hiromi, Miki, Sayuri, Tomoko

**Factor D-4: Self-esteem**
Financial ownership: Akiko, Hiromi
Financial autonomy: Akiko
Financial decision-making power: Akiko, Hiromi
Sense of personal power: Akiko, Hiromi

**Factor D-5: Life philosophy**
Gender role expectations: Sayuri
Gender role practice: Sayuri
Financial resource distribution: Sayuri

**Factor D-6: Attribution and interpretation**
Sense of personal power: Akiko, Hiromi, Miki, Sayuri, Tomoko

**Factor D-7: Financial interest**
Financial decision-making involvement: Hiromi

**Factor D-8: Financial concerns**
Gender role choice: Sayuri
Gender role autonomy: Hiromi, Miki

**Factor D-9: Cultural attitudes**
Cultural adjustment: Sayuri
Linguistic adjustment: Sayuri

The factor, self-identity, yielded as a unique factor in Akiko’s case and it appeared to have brought confusion in her gender role identity and choice.

Cultural identity seemed to have affected Akiko’s gender role identity and gender role choice. For three participants, Miki, Sayuri, and Tomoko, the acceptance of their cultural
Table 14: Category D – Personal-Psychological Factors and Their Possible Effects

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<th>Factor</th>
<th>Area of Experiences</th>
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<td>D-6. Attribution and</td>
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Note 1: The abbreviations are: A: Akiko; H: Hiromi; M: Miki; S: Sayuri; T: Tomoko
Note 2: The presence of the "*" sign in a cell indicates a factor has contributed to an certain area of experience for that particular participant.

Identity as Japanese appeared to have helped them come to terms with their language limitations. It seemed to have helped them maintain their sense of personal power for they no longer felt self-conscious about their language abilities.

Personality seemed to have affected two participants’ gender role identities. For
Akiko, her perfectionist trait appeared to have shaped her gender role identity as a career woman although it was not necessarily what she wanted. For Sayuri, her independent trait seemed to have motivated her to develop her career to maintain her independence.

Different personality traits appeared to have influenced participants’ gender role behaviours in all five cases. Participants, Akiko, Hiromi, Sayuri and Tomoko, all with an assertive trait, were able to express their opinions to their husband or to engage their husbands in negotiations and communications. Miki, who identified herself as “patient”, appeared to back down more from conflicts.

In three cases, personality seemed to have affected participants’ gender role practice. Akiko’s perfectionism and Miki’s patience seemed to have led them to take on more housework. According to Tomoko, her assertiveness had increased her husband’s contribution in household tasks.

Personality appeared to have affected two participants’ involvement in the financial decision-making process. Miki and Tomoko’s easy-going personality trait appeared to have decreased their involvement in the financial decision-making process. Miki’s patient and Tomoko’s “not leadership type” traits appeared to lead them to defer their financial decision-making power.

Personality also seemed to have influenced the participants’ sense of personal power in all five cases. Participants, Hiromi, Sayuri and Tomoko, who exhibited an assertive trait, seemed to have derived a sense of personal power from their actions. Miki’s resilience also appeared to have brought her a sense of personal power because she was able to deal with crisis and still maintain self-respect. Akiko’s perfectionism had led her to compromise her needs for her husband’s, which probably had decreased her sense of personal power.
Besides, her perfectionism seemed to have affected her sense of personal power because her expectations of herself had hindered her self-validation for personal achievement.

Self-esteem appeared to have certain effects on two participants’ experiences. For both Akiko and Hiromi, their self-esteem issues seemed to have affected their sense of worth and capacity for self-validation. It seemed that their self-esteem had somewhat determined their sense of personal power, and further affected their sense of financial ownership and decision-making power.

Life philosophy was a unique factor for Sayuri. It seemed to have brought her flexibility and affected her gender role expectation, gender role practice and the distribution of her financial resources.

The factor of attribution and interpretation, appeared to have affected how participants perceived and interpreted their experiences, how they dealt with their loss, and how they coped with obstacles, which essentially seemed to have contributed to their sense of personal power. The participants’ other psychological factors, such as personality, self-esteem and life philosophy appeared to have affected their attribution and interpretation styles.

Financial interest was found to have affected Hiromi’s involvement in the decision-making process. Financial concerns were found to have affected Sayuri’s gender role choice and Miki’s financial autonomy. The presence of these personal factors illustrated that the participants’ experiences were embedded in reality and their behaviours could be driven by circumstances, rather than their power.

The factor, cultural attitudes, was unique in Sayuri’s case because she seemed to be the only participant who had possessed more cultural resources than her husband. Sayuri’s
cultural sensitivity seemed to have contributed to her efforts in making cultural adjustments.

**Category E: Husband’s Attitudes**

Five factors were identified in this category and their possible effects on the participant’s experiences were displayed in the following and in Table 15 (see Table 15).

**Factor E-1: Husband’s gender role attitudes**
- Gender role choice: Miki
- Gender role autonomy: Akiko, Hiromi, Miki, Sayuri, Tomoko
- Gender role practice: Akiko, Hiromi, Miki, Sayuri, Tomoko

**Factor E-2: Husband’s financial attitudes**
- Financial resource distribution: Akiko, Hiromi, Miki, Sayuri, Tomoko
- Financial autonomy: Akiko, Hiromi, Miki, Sayuri, Tomoko
- Financial decision-making power: Hiromi, Miki, Sayuri, Tomoko

**Factor E-3: Husband’s cultural attitudes**
- Cultural adjustment: Akiko, Hiromi, Miki, Sayuri, Tomoko
- Linguistic adjustment: Akiko, Hiromi, Miki, Sayuri, Tomoko
- Linguistic power: Akiko, Hiromi, Sayuri
- Sense of personal power: Akiko, Hiromi, Sayuri, Tomoko

**Factor E-4: Husband’s conflict resolution attitudes**
- Decision-making power: Miki, Tomoko
- Sense of personal power: Akiko, Tomoko

**Factor E-5: Husband’s emotional connections**
- Decision-making power: Akiko, Tomoko
- Sense of personal power: Akiko, Miki, Tomoko

Husbands’ gender role attitudes appeared to have affected all five participants’ gender role autonomy and gender role practice. In all five cases, all the husbands appeared to have respected the participants’ autonomy and supported their gender role choice. Her husband’s gender role attitudes seemed to have certain influence on Miki’s gender role choice.

Husbands’ gender role attitudes appeared to have affected the gender role practice in all five marriages. In Hiromi’s case, her husband took on the main responsibility in childrearing and shared household tasks, but he also at times left chores for Hiromi to finish
Table 15: Category E – Husband’s Attitudes and Their Possible Effects

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<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Area of Experiences</th>
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<td>E-4. Husband’s conflict resolution attitudes</td>
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<td>E-5. Husband’s emotional connections</td>
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Note 1: The abbreviations are: A: Akiko; H: Hiromi; M: Miki; S: Sayuri; T: Tomoko
Note 2: The presence of the “*” sign in a cell indicates a factor has contributed to a certain area of experience for that particular participant.

and could not be persuaded to do them. Hiromi’s case illustrated that the husband’s attitudes might not be always consistent. In Akiko’s case, it seemed that her husband did not initiate much housework but would do it upon Akiko’s request. His contribution in housework also appeared to have declined since the beginning of their relationship. In Miki’s case, her husband’s contribution to housework also seemed to have decreased, and he often refused to do extra housework and childrearing tasks when Miki requested. In Sayuri’s case, it seemed that her husband often initiated housework and took on her share of responsibilities. In Tomoko’s case, her husbands appeared to share housework and childrearing tasks with her. He also took on handy work and initiated in sharing Tomoko’s chores. His contribution in housework seemed to have increased because of Tomoko’s complaints. Akiko, Miki and Tomoko’s cases demonstrated that the husband’s attitudes could change at different times of
the marriage. Akiko, Sayuri and Tomoko’s cases showed that the husband’s initiation of housework was important to the participants’ level of satisfactions.

The financial attitudes of the husbands appeared to have affected all five participants’ actual financial autonomy, and the distribution of his financial resources. In all five cases, the husbands displayed the willingness to share their financial resources and did not set any limit on the participants’ financial autonomy. The only exception was Miki’s case. Although Miki’s husband shared his financial resources with her and encouraged her to spend money, he also exhibited an attitude that seemed to have decreased Miki’s actual access to his financial resources and limited her financial autonomy.

Husbands’ financial attitudes seemed to have affected the participants’ financial decision-making power in four cases. For Hiromi and Sayuri, their husband’s attitudes appeared to have provided them certain financial decision-making power. For Miki, her husband had given her the financial decision-making power but on the other hand also seemed to have decreased her actual decision-making power by disregarding her opinions in the decision-making process. Miki’s case demonstrated the subtlety of the power dynamic in a relationship where the actual power might not be as presented. For Tomoko, her husband’s attitudes seemed to have led her to compromise in the decision-making process and decreased her financial decision-making power.

Husbands’ cultural attitudes appeared to have affected the level of cultural adjustment and linguistic adjustment in the relationship in all five cases. In Akiko and Tomoko’s cases, the cultural was mainly unidirectional, which increased the participants’ responsibility in making cultural adjustments. In Hiromi, Miki and Sayuri’s cases, their husband’s interest in their culture seemed to have contributed to a mutual cultural adjustment in the marriage.
However, in Hiromi’s case, her husband’s attitudes also had put her under certain pressure to adjust to a Western thinking pattern, which Hiromi defined as “logical and linear.”

In three cases, husbands’ cultural attitudes appeared to have further affected the level of linguistic power in the marriage. In Akiko’s cases, her husband’s cultural attitudes appeared to have amplified the power of his language resources and affect the linguistic power between them. In Hiromi and Sayuri’s cases, their husband’s ability to speak Japanese had turned their Japanese language into a powerful resource for them and seemed to have increased their linguistic power in the marriage.

Husbands’ cultural attitudes appeared to have contributed to the participants’ sense of personal power in four cases. In Akiko and Tomoko’s case, their husband’s certain cultural attitudes toward them seemed to have made them feel belittled and it affected their sense of personal power. In Miki and Sayuri’s cases, their husband’s cultural attitudes seemed to have brought them a sense of respect, which provided them a sense of personal power. In Hiromi’s case, her husband’s cultural attitudes appeared to have provided her a sense of respect due to his studying her culture, but on the other hand, his demand for her to think in a Western way also frustrated Hiromi and somehow decreased her sense of personal power.

Husbands’ conflict resolution attitudes seemed to have affected two participants’ actual decision-making power in areas other than finances. It also seemed to have affected two participants’ sense of personal power. For Miki, her husband’s conflict resolution attitudes appeared to have decreased her decision-making power in a covert way. For Tomoko, although her husband was in charge of most financial decisions, she appeared to have gained more decision-making power in areas other than finances due to her husband’s willingness to compromise in conflicts, which might also have increased her sense of
personal power. For Akiko, she felt a sense of powerless when her husband walked away from their conflicts and the issues remained unresolved.

Husbands’ emotional connections with the participants appeared to have affected the participants’ decision-making power in Akiko and Tomoko’s cases. These husbands’ affection for the participants appeared to have increased their efforts in meeting the participants’ needs, which might have provided the participants’ some actual decision-making power.

Husbands’ emotional connections seemed to have affected the participants’ sense of personal power in three cases. For Akiko, although her husband had made the effort to please her, she felt a sense of powerlessness in not being understood and not being able to achieve the level of intimacy she desired. For Miki, her husband’s lack of openness with her left her a sense of powerlessness in changing her family’s situation. For Tomoko, her husband’s affection for her appeared to have given her a sense of power.
CHAPTER VI: DISCUSSION

Implications for Theories

This study has identifies five categories of factors that contribute to the participants’ experiences related to gender equality. Findings in this study suggest that the participants’ overall experiences of gender equality are influenced by the combinations of various factors across these five common categories. Each participant’s experience in each specific domain or area was affected by different combinations of certain factors, and the nature of these combinations varied from one case to another. It is important to note that this study dealt with a wide range of experiences related to gender equality and that these five categories should not be concluded as common categories for a specific area of experience.

The following three prominent theories that conceptualize gender equality issues are discussed in terms of theoretical implications of the present study: (a) ideology theory, (b) resource theory, and (c) process theory. Cultural resources, socio-cultural factors, and personal-psychological factors are the three major components that emerged in this study and have not been covered in those theories. The two culture-related components, culture resources and socio-cultural factors, especially have enriched the theories of gender equality in the study of interracial marriage.

How the findings in this study apply to the existing theories is discussed in the following:

Implications for Ideology Theory

Ideology theory perceives men and women as different cultures, and their gender role practice is predetermined by their gender role ideology acquired through early socialization. (Shehan & Lee, 1990). Ideology theory proposes that most decisions of gender role practices
between couples are made without conscious negotiation, and are likely to stem from their internalized gender conceptions. Couples often enter a relationship with the desire for gender equality but are often unconsciously driven by their traditional gender role expectations and continue to interact with each other unequally. (Knudson-Martin, 1997).

Findings in this study are inconsistent in supporting the above notions that ideology theory has proposed. In three cases, individuals' gender role practices more or less were driven by the gender role ideology they had acquired from their early socialization, even for those who had the awareness of gender equality. It supports Blaisure and Allen's (1995) conclusion that it is difficult to translate the ideology of gender equality into actual practice, even among those who have acquired the concept and awareness of gender equality. However, in two cases, the gender role ideology from early socialization seemed to have minimum influence on the participants' gender role practice. Besides, three participants took actions to negotiate for a higher level of equality. It seemed that although the gender role ideology from early socialization did have certain influences on some participants' experiences, it did not always dominate their gender role practices or behaviours. However, one possibility is that some participants might not have recognized the influences of the gender role ideology they had acquired early on.

Findings in this study have also challenged another notion of the ideology theory that individuals' gender role identity and gender role ideology are inflexible and do not change easily (Knudson-Martin & Mahoney, 1996; Smith & Schooler, 1978). Although early socialization seemed to have affected most participants' gender role identity in terms of what they wanted to be as a woman, all five participants in this study experienced changes in their gender role beliefs and acquired new gender role awareness. Their acquisition of new gender
role awareness had either changed their gender role expectations or challenged their gender role identity and even affected their gender role practice and behaviours in some cases.

Results of this study seemed to suggest that participants' gender role expectations, gender role identity, gender role choice, gender role practice and behaviours were influenced by their gender role beliefs but not necessarily the ideology from their early socialization. The new gender role awareness that the participants had acquired also had its impact on their experiences in the above areas.

There also seems to be a common theoretical assumption among literature that the ideology individuals acquire from their early socialization is always traditional and patriarchal. As Knudson-Martin and Mahoney (1996) mentioned, we have all been socialized to a certain extent into assumptions of patriarchy. Two cases in this study demonstrated that there were inconsistent messages from the participants' early socialization and the participants were exposed to the concepts of patriarchy as well as equality. One case particularly illustrated that it was possible for individuals to be taught the concept of gender equality by their parents through the process of their early socialization.

These findings reflect the transition of gender role ideology in Japanese society, and the gender role dilemma Japanese women face. Previous literature has pointed out that under the influences of Western feminist movements, Japan has undergone a major transition in their gender role beliefs in recent years (Yoshizumi, 1995). During this transition, there are confusion and inconsistency in women's gender role attitudes (Suzuki, 1991). Although many women's attitudes have moved more toward egalitarianism (Buck, Newton, & Muramatsu, 1984; Kelsky, 1996a; Suzuki, 1991; Taylor, 1993), they are also caught in a dilemma between the traditional value system and the desire for independence and
actualization (Takahashi, 1992).

Most participants in this study expressed their desire for gender equality before they entered their marriage and three of them expressed a strong desire of continuing their careers after marriage. These findings support Yoshizumi (1995) and Nester's (1992) insights that Japanese women now question the values of their traditional gender role and they wish to continue developing their careers after marriage but find it difficult to find a partner who will understand and respect their work and share both housework and child care responsibilities. All five participants claimed that they had married for love, and one of them particularly emphasized the importance of intimacy to her. This finding reflects Walsh and Taylor's (1982), and Yoshizumi's (1995) assertions that the modern Japanese women desire emotional intimacy in marriage and are seeking a deeper relationship in which they can create an emotional bond with their husband.

This study has shown that the five participants' gender role attitudes ranged from that of being very traditional to that of being egalitarian. Even among those who were looking for equality in the marriage, their expectations of equality were different. Some perceived gender role segregation as one form of equality while others believed in the breakdown of ascribed gender role as equality. Some participants exhibited ambivalence toward their gender role beliefs and some experienced inconsistency between their beliefs and actions. These above findings indicate that there are inconsistent gender role beliefs among young Japanese women, and some of them are caught in two sets of gender role beliefs and experience internal conflicts in their beliefs.

Results of this study also suggest that not only Japanese women from a younger generation are facing the dilemma of their gender role, but individuals from an older
generation also seem to exhibit ambivalence toward their gender role beliefs which affect the messages they convey to the next generation. As Yoshizumi (1995) points out, the trend of gender equality in Japan does not only strike women of younger generations but also the older generations.

Kelsky (1994, 1996a, 1996b) suggests that the prevalence of interracial relationships between Japanese women and Western men is a feminist movement among these young Japanese women in challenging the patriarchy in Japanese society. Results of this study are insufficient in supporting her assertion. First, although most participants displayed the desire for gender equality, one participant revealed that gender equality issue was not a motive of her choice of interracial marriage. It is important to note most participants who came forward to participate in this study might be those who already had more awareness of gender equality issues and they might not represent the majority of Japanese women in interracial marriage. The inconsistency in participants’ gender role attitudes further demonstrate that gender equality may not be the reason for these Japanese women’s choice of interracial marriage.

Secondly, among those participants who wished to have an equal relationship, only two of them disclosed the thoughts that interracial marriage might bring them more gender equality. However, all participants denied to have intentionally used interracial marriage as a mean of obtaining gender equality. One participant had even rejected the idea of interracial marriage in the first place; three participants believed that Japanese men of younger generations had exhibited a more egalitarian attitude that it would be possible for them to obtain gender equality if they were married to Japanese men. These findings point out that interracial marriage is not necessarily an overt and conscious action these women took to
rebel against the patriarchy in Japanese society. However, one possible explanation is that participants in this study may not be fully aware how their internal motive of pursuing gender equality has shaped their marital choices. As one participant pointed out, she realized that she had unconsciously avoided Japanese men for their patriarchal mentality.

Another major finding of this study is the effect of socio-cultural factors on the participations' gender roles. Imamura (1990) has pointed out, foreign wives commonly face the challenge of attaining new gender role identities that fit into the social context of their husbands' country. This study finds that at different times of their immigration process, all participants encountered changes in their gender roles, willingly or unwillingly. However, the changes did not seem to be related to their need to fit into the collective identity within the host culture. Rather, they were associated with some circumstantial factors such as pregnancy and career obstacles, or internal factors, such as the change of one's gender role beliefs and identity. Socio-cultural factors are found to have affected the participants' gender roles in two ways. First, the social context of North America had brought most participants a certain degree of gender role liberation. Secondly, the acculturation process participants experience had challenged their gender role beliefs and reshaped their gender role expectations in some cases. It had changed some participants' gender role behaviours in that they had become more independent and assertive, which allowed them to engage their husbands in a dialogue or to sustain their personal power in argument. Their negotiating attempts sometimes led to changes in gender role practice in their marriage.

Refsing (1998) notes, during the process of adaptation, foreign wives may feel ambivalent or even a sense of betrayal about their role changes when the new roles contradict the old roles that they acquired in their home culture through early socialization. They then
experience an identity crisis that involves a loss of the inner self. Refsing's (1998) insight properly portrays the experiences of one of the participants in this study. Another finding of this study is that the participants’ adaptation of their gender role was influenced by their causal attribution and interpretations of such changes. The participants who were able to accept and validate their new gender roles seemed to be able to maintain a better sense of personal power. Whether or how the participants’ acceptance and validation of their gender role affect their gender equality needs to be investigated in future studies.

One assertion about the gender role issues in interracial marriage is that partners from two different cultures may have completely different perceptions and expectations of their gender roles (Refsing, 1998). Refsing has pointed out that within a specific culture men and women are often assigned complementary gender roles so that people who have grown up in the same culture have a common model of gender role for them to understand or to follow through. On the other hand, in cross-cultural marriage, such an understanding or a tacit consensus is often expected to be missing. However, this situation was not found in this study. Four participants shared compatible gender role identities and gender role expectations with their husbands’. In fact, three participants seemed to have exhibited a higher expectation of egalitarianism than their husbands, and they were from a society that was supposed to be more patriarchal than North America. It seems to indicate that the difference in gender role identities and expectations between the husband and wife is more of a gender specific issue, rather than a cultural issue, at least in this study. As Larson, Hammond, and Harper (1998) have suggested, women generally tend to monitor their relationship more closely and are more sensitive and responsive to the level of equality.

In summary, gender role beliefs are found to be fluid in that individuals can acquire
gender role beliefs that challenge the ideology that they have acquired from their early socialization. The changes in gender role beliefs may require a long period of transition, and during that transition, individuals are often under the influence of both their new gender role awareness and their early socialization experiences. Women in interracial marriage may be more susceptible to encountering a change in their gender role due to career obstacles that they face as new immigrants. There is no evidence, in this study, however, to support the notion that collective identities in the host culture lead to changes in individuals’ gender roles or inconsistent gender role identities between the couples.

Implications for Resource Theory

Resource theory asserts that in a relationship, the power is on the side of the partner who contributes the greatest resources to the marriage, and the distribution of relevant resources between a couple determines their performance in housework chores and their decision-making power (Shehan & Lee, 1990). The results of this study suggested that the participants’ financial resources did influence their experiences of housework performance, financial autonomy and financial decision-making power. The lack of financial resources increased participant’s household and childrearing task responsibilities in some cases, and decreased participants’ financial autonomy and/or their decision-making power in some other cases. The possession of their own financial resources brought the participants certain financial autonomy. In addition, all five participants’ employments were found to have affected their husband’s contributions to the household task, consistent with the finding in previous studies (Barnett & Baruch, 1987; Blaisure & Allen, 1995; Chai, 1987; Hsia, 1996; Krauze; Rodman, 1972; Roxroat & Shehan, 1987) that wives’ employment affects their husband’s involvement in household tasks. It seems that the financial resources do have their
own power in affecting the participants' experiences.

However, one major finding of this study is that the power of financial resources was largely determined by the participants' attitudes, rather than their husbands' attitudes. One of the assertions of the resources theory is that individuals who possessed more resources will wield more power over their dependent spouse (Shehan & Lee, 1990). Results of this study only showed that all five husbands had shared their financial resources with the participants and provided them financial autonomy. Whether the husbands' financial resources had ascribed them more power to direct the gender role practice in the marriage or to limit the participants' financial autonomy and financial decision-making power could not be concluded based on the data from this study. Only in one case, the husband had overtly used his financial resources to gain more decision-making power. Yet, in this case, the participant was in charge of the family finances.

What is clear from the results is that being financially dependent did lead the participants to either increase their contributions in housework and childrearing, or limit their financial autonomy or financial decision-making power. Based on these findings, it seems to be more accurate to say that the participants' lack of financial resources had led them to restrain their power, rather than saying that financial resources had yielded more power for the husbands.

How do various resources affect women in interracial marriage? First, immigrant women are known to experience more obstacles in adapting to life in the host culture (T. Noda, M. Noda, & Clark, 1990). Previous studies indicate that many highly educated and professional women are unable to obtain employment that is related to their qualifications and experiences, and they are forced to take jobs at the bottom of the labor hierarchy (Chai,
1987; Man, 1995; Rockhill & Tomic, 1994; Romano, 1997; Toro-Morn; 1998). All the participants in this study reported that they had encountered certain obstacles in their career development, which led them to become dependent on their husbands financially to a certain degree at the time of the interview.

Secondly, the factor of cultural resources has emerged in this study as an important factor that contributes to participants’ experiences. Krausz (1986) maintains that cultural variables have significant impacts on the distribution of family responsibilities and decision-making power. Among different cultural resources identified in this study, participants’ social competence had brought them a sense of personal power, although it might not have directly changed their actual gender role practice or decision-making power. Social competence and autonomy, as defined by Ishiyama (1989), include the social skills and the abilities to communicate, obtain information, study the social norms, develop relationships, assert self, problem solve, access other’s resources and seek help from others. Acquiring and practicing social skills are essential to social survival in the host culture. Ishiyama points out that being unable to completely demonstrate their knowledge and competence, immigrants often can not assert themselves when needed and they often miss out on many self-validating opportunities. Results of this study suggest that participants’ social competence did not only bring them a sense of independence and security but also increased their capacity in coping with obstacles. Yet, whether participants’ social competence could bring them self-validation and increase their sense of personal power seemed to depend on whether the participants had recognized their social competence or had benefited from it. One participant displayed a higher level of social competence in that she had obtained a landing immigrant visa on her own, had found a job that matched her employment status in Japan, and probably
had the highest level of English proficiency, compared to other participants. However, while some other participants identified their social competence as a factor that bought them more personal power, this participant did not seem to recognize her achievements and did not acquire a sense of personal power from it. Another participant did not make the connection between her social competence and her personal power either, but her descriptions indicated that her ability to access social resources and deal with crisis had indeed increased her personal power in the bargaining with her husband.

Another cultural resource found in this study is cultural advantage. Some participants experienced the pressure to adapt to their husbands' culture for being foreign wives living in their husbands' country. Yet, their husbands' cultural attitudes were crucial elements in determining the actual power of their cultural advantage and they had a direct impact on participants' sense of personal power. In three cases, the husbands' ethnocentricity was found to have increased the power of their cultural advantage in which it increased the pressure on the participants' to adjust to their husbands' culture, and also generated negative feelings, such as frustration, anger and inferiority, within the participants. One possible explanation is that the husbands' ethnocentricity devalued the participants' home culture and hurt their ethnic pride. In three cases, the husbands' interests in the participants' culture and their willingness to learn about the participants' culture made the participants feel respected, which increased the participants' satisfaction in the cultural and language domain.

Language fluency is another important cultural resource identified in this study. Kimura (1994) asserts that foreign wives' language proficiency affects their ability to pursue upward mobility in occupations. Ishiyama and Westwood (1992) mentioned that limited language and cultural competence often become obstacles for immigrants to achieve personal
careers. In all five cases, the participants' language barriers affected their careers - it delayed the participants' career development, limited their career opportunities, or decreased their employment status. As a result of their employment obstacles, all participants experienced a decrease in their financial resources, which limited their financial contributions, and in most cases eventually affected their gender role practice, financial autonomy, and/or financial decision-making power.

In all five cases, individuals whose native language was the dominant language had more linguistic power, and their linguistic power became even stronger during arguments. However, the husbands' attitudes were found to be important factors in determining the participants' linguistic power. First, the husbands' efforts in making linguistic adjustments could determine the power of the linguistic resources in the marriage in the first place. For participants whose husbands had a good level of language competency in Japanese, their Japanese language became a powerful resource for them and provided them more linguistic power, which countered their husband's linguistic power in English.

Secondly, individuals' linguistic power was also determined by how their spouse handled his or her linguistic power. Romano (1997) mentioned that the spouse with superior language proficiency had the advantage to direct the conversation and set its style, which provided him/her more power. One of the participants reported decreased linguistic power when her husband used his linguistic power to change the direction of their conversation or used big words in their communication. Romano (1997) also pointed out that sometimes the power in language can be manipulated to serve personal ends. One participant in this study experienced a decrease of decision-making power in different areas when her husband used his linguistic ability to persuade her. In another case where the participant had more
linguistic power than her husband, her cultural sensitivity led her to contain her linguistic power by switching their conversations from Japanese to English, which probably helped balance the linguistic power between them.

Safilios-Rothschild (1976) expands the definitions and areas of resources, and divides them into seven categories. These categories are: (a) socioeconomic (money, social mobility, prestige), (b) affective (affection, love, feeling needed), (c) expressive (understanding, emotional support, special attention), (d) companionship (social, leisure, intellectual), (e) sex, (f) services (house keeping services, childcare, personal services, linkage services – linkages to other social resources), and (g) power in the relationship. This study indicates that the importance of the affective and expressive resources is no less than that of socioeconomic power. In some cases, husbands’ affection and emotional understanding of the participants had positively affected the participants’ sense of personal power, and also their actual decision-making power in some cases.

Results of this study also suggest that participants’ attribution and interpretation of their experiences had the capacity to amplify or diffuse the power of financial and cultural resources.

In terms of financial resources, although all five participants were financially dependent on their husbands to a certain degree, only one participant experienced a strong loss of personal power in that she resented her role as a full-time housewife and perceived her situation to be the case of loss of freedom and independence. One possible explanation is that this participant had no financial resources of her own, which might also have deepened her feelings of loss. However, another participant who had no financial resources displayed a sense of entitlement over her husband’s financial resources because she attributed her
husband's career accomplishment to her own sacrifice of career opportunities. The other
participants either perceived the changes in their career development as a part of life
experiences rather than a loss, an inevitable outcome of immigration, or a second chance to
develop a new career. They all had come to terms with such changes and they were satisfied
with their current gender roles.

Participants' interpretation of their cultural resources also had contributed to the
power of their cultural resources. Participants who had identified their social competence as
a resource or had benefited from their social competence seemed to have derived a sense of
personal power from it. All five participants experienced certain language barriers in
expressing themselves but only one participant experienced a strong sense of loss of personal
power. One explanation is that this participant's high level of language sophistication in
Japanese had formed a strong identity for her but being an ESL speaker stripped such
identity, which jeopardized her sense of personal power. Another explanation is that this
participant had high expectations of herself in that she always perceived inadequacy in her
English skills and therefore was unable to validate her English language skills and social
competence. In comparison, the other four participants either had exhibited confidence in
their English proficiency or had accepted their language limitations.

One of the implications of the above findings is on how participants perceived and
interpreted the changes of their gender roles and their career development contributed to their
adaptability in these changes. It affected their feeling of being financially dependent, which
further determined whether financial resources could influence their sense of personal power.
Another implication is that how participants perceived their social competence and language
abilities and how they coped with their language barriers affected their self-validation
(Ishiyama, 1989), and had certain effects on their sense of personal power, which might amplify or diffuse their husbands' ascribed cultural and linguistic power. As one of the core notions postulated in Ellis' rational emotive behaviour therapy, individuals' emotional reactions to certain events are caused by their beliefs about such events (Corey, 1996). The present study indicates that participants' thinking patterns did have a powerful influence on their feelings toward their experiences and their sense of personal power.

How participants attributed or interpreted their experiences was found to be related to their psychological issues, such as cultural identity, personality, self-esteem, and life philosophy. Among these factors, cultural identity affected participants' acceptance of their language limitations in this study. According to the black racial identity development model (Sue & Sue, 1990), there are five different stages in one's racial identity development. These stages include (a) conformity stage, (b) dissonance stage, (c) resistance and immersion stage, (d) introspection stage, and (e) integrative awareness stage. Three participants' cultural identities exhibited characteristics of the integrative awareness stage, which included the development of an inner self, appreciation of the unique aspects of their culture and the host culture, as well as the acceptance and appreciation of other minor groups (Sue & Sue, 1990). These three participants all had accepted their language limitations after achieving an inner sense of pride towards their ethnic background.

In summary, this study has identified cultural resources as unique resources in interracial marriage. Financial resources and cultural resources were found to have their own power in affecting the participants' gender role practice, financial autonomy or financial decision-making power, but the husbands' attitudes as well as the participants' attribution and interpretation of their experiences and resources had the capacity to further determine the
power of these resources.

Implications for Process Theory

Process theory perceives gender as a part of interpersonal processes and it argues that both individuals' gender role identity and their gender role relationship are an ongoing process (Knudson-Martin, 1997). Blaisure and Allen (1995) maintain that actual equality requires conscious negotiation and they define the ongoing attention to marital equality as the "process of vigilance," which requires couples to monitor their relationship constantly and make necessary adjustments.

Knudson-Martin and Mahoney (1996) suggest that the negotiation process can change the power dynamic initially determined by the couples' ideology and resources. This study has found that the negotiation process can be a subtle and covert process in that it happens on a daily basis in many areas, such as making decisions, resolving conflicts, and meeting one's needs. The negotiation process can also manifest as overt confrontations. This process is reflected in three participants' initiations of dialogues with their husbands when they perceived inequality in certain areas. In these cases, participants exhibited the vigilance of equality in that they paid attention to the contributions between them and their husbands, and they were motivated to bring up the issue of gender equality.

In this study, participants' new gender role awareness contributed to their vigilance of equality and motivated them to examine the gender role practices in their marriage. This finding also reflects Blaisure and Allen's (1995) concept of "reflective assessment", which emphasized the importance of monitoring one's own contribution to the relationship and family life in the areas of parenting, household tasks, and domestic responsibilities.

In three cases, participants' financial resources were found to have decreased their
capacity in the negotiation process. The lack of ownership of their husbands’ money made some participants back down from argument and compromises their opinions. Another factor affected the negotiation process is participants’ language competency. Participants with a higher level of linguistic ability were able to argue more during the negotiation process.

However, in the present study, the participants’ initiation in negotiation did not always bring them the outcome they desire. It suggests that it takes more than the vigilance of equality for negotiations to be productive. Husbands’ attitudes were found to be crucial factors that affected the outcome of the negotiation, which eventually affected the participants’ sense of personal power or even their actual decision-making power. The husbands’ emotional connections, such as their emotional involvement in the family, their affection for the participants and their understanding of the participants’ needs all could direct the outcome of the negotiation. This study has revealed that the husbands’ mere affection and love were not sufficient enough to produce desirable results in negotiations. A productive negotiation required both individuals’ mutual understanding and consensus of their expectations. One implication of the above finding is that the compatibility in the couples’ attitudes in each area, such as their gender role attitudes, financial attitudes, and cultural attitudes is an important element in determining the productivity of their negotiation. The husbands’ conflict resolution attitudes, e. g., his engagement in the conflict resolution process, use of his persuasion power, and his willingness to compromise all seem to affect the productivity of the negotiation.

suggested that other than reflective assessment, an individual’s emotional involvement is also important in the process of negotiation. The “emotional involvement” refers to the efforts of meeting each others’ emotional needs, which involves consciously changing relationship styles, communicating emotions and not withdrawing from conflicts.

Other factors identified in this study to contribute to the negotiation process are the participants’ psychological factors, such as their personality and self-esteem. Participants’ personality and self-esteem were found to have affected how they reacted during the process of negotiation. Participants who were more assertive or had a higher level of self-esteem were able to sustain their personal power during the process of negotiation and achieve a more desirable outcome. Participants who were more tolerant or had self-esteem issues either backed down easily from conflicts or had the tendency to defeat themselves. However, in a patriarchal society, women can easily be conditioned to certain gender role behaviours through the process of socialization. Certain personality traits, such as “patience” and “perfectionism” can be results of early socialization, rather than genetic endowments.

Knudson-Martin (1997) asserted that the gender relationship is an ongoing negotiation process embedded in the social context the individuals are related. This study suggests that the socio-cultural factors have affected the participants’ experiences in two ways. First, the social context of Canada provided most participants a certain degree of gender role liberation, especially when compared to their gender role experiences in Japan. Secondly, the acculturation process participants went through either affected their gender role awareness in that it brought them higher expectations of equality, or affected their gender role behaviours so they had become more assertive in expressing their opinions. Either way, acculturation had promoted the participants’ negotiation for equality and increased their
capacity in negotiation.

In summary, the negotiation process in marriage was found to be an important factor in determining whether or not the participants could achieve their desired equality. Individuals’ new gender role awareness, especially the concept of gender equality increases their vigilance of gender equality; their financial resources and language competency affected their power in the negotiation process. The husbands’ conflict resolution attitudes and emotional connections with the participant, the compatibility of gender role expectations between the couple, and the participants’ psychological issues also contributed to the outcome of the negotiation. In interracial marriage, the socio-cultural factors had certain effects on participants’ gender role beliefs and behaviours, which contributed to their initiations of negotiation and their capacity in influencing the negotiation outcome.

Implications for Future Research

Results of this study suggest some different directions for future research. One direction is to further expand the domains and areas of experiences related to gender equality. This study has articulated the notion that areas of gender equality are beyond the issues of housework division and decision-making power, as commonly identified in quantitative research. It has also demonstrated that perceptions of gender equality are subjective and based on each individual’s expectations in each area. In this study, culture and language issues have emerged as an important domain of gender equality for interracial marriage. A sense of personal power has emerged as another domain that is relevant to gender equality. Issues such as conflict resolution and intimacy have also surfaced in some cases as areas of importance. Future studies can focus on identifying common domains and areas that are important to participants by involving a larger number of participants to be interviewed.
Another direction is to further distinguish and articulate the differences in each area of experiences. One area of focus will be the definitions of decision-making power. The participants in this study initially appeared to automatically associate decision-making with finances, but the actual data showed that decision-making power involved areas other than finances, and that the participants often overlooked their decision-making power in other areas. Another issue involves the differentiation between the power in the decision-making outcome and process. Cromwell and Olson (1975) define power into three domains; bases, processes and outcomes. The “power processes” refers to the ongoing strategies that individuals use to maximize the impact of their resources during the course of a decision-making process. The “power outcomes” are the identification of who makes the final decision or wins in negotiations. Findings in this study indicate that there is a difference between (a) the power in the decision-making process and (b) the power in the decision-making outcome. The participants’ involvement or approach used during the decision-making process did not always affect their power in influencing decision-making outcomes. The subtlety of these differences can be addressed in future research.

In the study of power, a few issues also need attention in future studies. First of all, the areas of power need to be clearly defined. In a relationship, individuals’ power can be present in various areas and the husband and wife might have different areas of power. Secondly, there is a difference between an individual’s actual power and perceived power, and the individuals’ perception of power is found to have affected their perception of equality. Third, individuals’ sense of personal power can be further defined. The word “power” seemed to imply dominance and control, but individuals’ sense of personal power might come from an inner feeling of strength, confidence, and self-respect. Different sources
of personal power can be further explored in future studies. Finally, when studying the issue of power, it will also be important to clarify power as the comparison between the two parties or the comparison within an individual.

Another implication for future studies is the importance of involving the husbands in research. Findings in this study suggest that the overall power dynamic in a relationship is an important indicator of the level of gender equality between the husband and wife. Lye and Biblarz (1993), as well as Bowen and Orthner (1983) have found that the discrepancy of gender role expectations between the husband and wife has an impact on their marital satisfaction. Results of this study imply that the discrepancy between the husband and wife in their beliefs and attitudes in every domain, not only gender role expectations, affected their level of conflict and marital satisfaction. The inclusion of husbands in future research will allow researchers to gain an additional, possibly more objective, perspective on the power dynamic between a couple, and to compare the couple’s attitudes and expectations in every area and understand how the compatibility and discrepancy between their attitudes and expectations affects their relationship.

Some participants in this study experienced changes in their perception of gender equality. It suggests that marriages go through changes when different conditions occurred at different times, which can yield different dynamics between a couple and also affect individuals’ perception of equality. Longitudinal studies would be appropriate in identifying other variables that affect the participants’ experiences and perception of gender equality throughout a certain period of time. Such an approach also would allow researchers to examine whether the participants’ experiences of equality or their perception of equality have gone through any particular stages and to further theorize these phenomena.
Implications for Counselling

As professional caregivers, we need to help clients with changes in their consciousness and in their family structure. We must know in what context these struggles occur and what these struggles are (Kraze, 1986). Issues of gender equality in interracial marriage are often ignored although they actually cause many conflicts and subtle power struggles. Through story telling and data analysis, this study presented five very different stories and experiences. Although these participants’ experiences can not be generalized over to others, the uniqueness and richness of their stories do effectively portray a wide range of experiences for this population, which can help counsellors gain some understanding about gender equality issues women in interracial marriage face.

It has been pointed out that one major problem in women’s studies is that it is mainly dominated by Western feminist views and cultural factors are often overlooked (Hsia & Scanzoni, 1996). In cross-cultural counselling, counsellors’ understanding of clients’ cultural background and the sensitivity to their cultural issues are crucial to the effectiveness of counselling. Many concepts about Japanese women in interracial marriage are still based on the image of war brides. Such image can no longer portray a younger generation of intermarried Japanese women. This study presents a new portrait of the modern Japanese women, which will help counsellors break down certain stereotypes and gain a more accurate picture about their young Japanese woman clients and the problems they encounter.

Although factors that affect the participants’ experiences may vary from one couple to another, the findings in this study, especially the factors identified, can provide counsellors with some insights and directions while helping clients explore what has contributed to their experiences and perceptions of gender equality issues. For example, the research process of
this study has revealed that perceptions of gender equality are subjective, and different individuals may have different perceptions of the very same experiences. Hence counsellors are confronted with the issue of how to deal with different definitions or perceptions of equality between them and their clients. This issue can be even more prevalent in cross-cultural counselling because clients and counsellors are likely to have different definitions and perceptions of gender equality due to their different cultural backgrounds. Counsellors who impose their own beliefs and definitions of equality onto clients may be running the risk of invalidating the clients' feelings toward their experiences and creating internal conflicts for them. Counsellors who choose to collude with their clients without posing any challenges to them at all can miss the opportunity to intervene properly when gender equality is indeed an issue that causes problems in the clients' marriages.

This study has provided a more neutral and constructive approach in resolving such dilemmas. Using the same approach conducted in this study, counsellors might be able to help clients explore the underlying factors that contribute to their experiences, rather than focusing on labeling the level of their gender equality in their marriages. The findings of this study suggest that participants' experiences result from multiple factors, and that different combinations of factors construct different experiences for each participant. Among these factors, the participants' internalized views and experiences, e.g., their gender role beliefs and psychological components, affected the actual power of their external resources, such as financial resources and cultural resources. By helping clients explore how different factors contribute to their certain experiences in depth, counsellors could help clients identify and understand their own issues, which would provide insights to set the direction of therapy.

As discussed earlier, participants' perception of gender equality is found to be fluid.
External circumstances or the changes in the participants’ beliefs, such as the gaining of new gender role awareness, can have effects on their perceptions. Findings in this study also suggest that participants’ perception of equality can be influenced by their own expectations, which can lead them to overlook or over estimate their spouses’ actual contributions. By helping clients identify external circumstances that induce changes in their marriage, counsellors can assist the clients to develop coping strategies and adaptability in dealing with those external obstacles. By encouraging clients to examine their perceptions of equality, counsellors can help their clients gain a more realistic view on the actual level of gender equality they have in the marriage. In addition, for clients who are going through a transition of their gender role beliefs, it can be difficult for them to clearly define their expectations without some self-doubts. By helping clients explore and define their gender role expectations, as well as confront their self-doubts, counsellors could assist clients to establish reasonable expectations and affirming their beliefs.

Another discovery of this study involves the importance of the compatibility between the participants and their husbands in terms of their beliefs and attitudes in different areas. It seems that when the couple’s beliefs, expectations, and needs, and values are compatible in a particular area, there are fewer marital conflicts and the participants are more likely to perceive equality. This finding suggests that in couple counselling, counsellors can help both clients examine their definitions and expectations of equality, their perception of the contributions between the two of them, as well as the commonalities and differences in their expectations and perceptions. When a couple reaches a better understating of each other’s needs and wants, it might become easier for counsellors to engage them in constructive negotiations and to help them work out solutions for their differences.
This study has also highlighted the importance of participants' causal attribution and interpretation of their experiences in constructing their sense of personal power. Given the same conditions or experiences, participants' different interpretations can yield different feelings toward these conditions and experiences, which often have some effects on their gender equality. Participants' attribution and interpretation of their life events were related to other psychological factors, such as their personality, self-esteem and life philosophy. These findings suggest that Ellis' rational emotive behaviour therapy can be an effective approach for counsellors in dealing with these issues. The rational emotional behaviour therapy emphasizes that individuals' negative emotional responses are initiated by a self-defeating belief system, which is based on irrational ideas that one has incorporated (Corey, 1996). By challenging clients' irrational beliefs, counsellors can help clients think positively and recognize their strengths so the clients' can have the resources to empower themselves.

Among different attribution and interpretation styles, it is found that self-validation was a powerful element that has helped participants regain their confidence and self-esteem and eventually grant them a sense of personal power. This study reveals that as immigrant women, participants experience many challenges, such as career obstacles, loss of financial resources, changes in gender roles, language barriers, and cultural adaptations. For intermarried women, these challenges can bring feelings of loss, pain, grief or desperation, and even threaten their sense of self. Counsellors need to be aware of these feelings that their clients experience and provide empathy and supports for them. The most important part is that counsellors need to help clients identify their sources of validation, internally and externally, to help them regain self-esteem and construct a new identity.

However, the study also suggests that in the process of self-validation (Ishiyama,
merely the participants’ intellectual rationalization of their experiences is not sufficient in achieving self-validation. The rationalization needs to be registered emotionally for self-validation to happen. It seems that the participants need to truly feel what they believe and the beliefs must be turned into self-acceptance, self-respect or self-love before the self-validation process can be completed. For counsellors, the tasks are not only to help clients challenge their irrational beliefs but also to identify their sources of validation and work on personal issues in order to help them translate their cognitive beliefs into their feelings.

Another implication of the results of this study is that gender equality can be influenced by other issues in the marriage. It is possible that the equality issue presented on the surface is rooted in other deeper problems. The instance in this study is the addiction issue surfaced in one of the cases. The addiction problem could cause the power dynamic in a relationship to shift, which will affect the gender equality in the marriage. Counsellors need to help clients identify the sources that affect their power dynamic in a relationship in order to tackle the true obstacles that are hindering gender equality in the clients’ marriages.

Strengths and Limitations

During the data analysis process, I realized that the issues this study covered were much broader than what I knew, and the scope of this study was beyond what I intended to accomplish. Given the broad range and the complexity of this study, I believe these issues need to be broken down into a number of different studies or be studied in a larger scale in order to obtain more depth. Although this study might not have enough depth in each area, it does cover a broad range of issues related to gender equality. In addition, I have made efforts to distinguish and define the subtle differences of each participant’s experiences in
each area, and to reveal the complexity of gender equality issues. Although the participants’ areas of experiences can be further organized or defined, it is also important to note that the focus of this study is to identify factors that affect the participants’ experiences. The complexity of this study will provide insights and directions for future studies.

As a case study design, this study’s generalizability to other cases is limited. In case studies, the method of generalization is analytic generalization, in which empirical results are compared to previous theories, not other cases (Yin, 1984). The specific and unique conditions existed in these cases cannot be indiscriminately applied to others and therefore the theories proposed in this study cannot be readily generalized to a larger population without further research. Findings of this study also cannot be generalized to other intermarried women with different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, especially when the historical and social influences on the gender and racial issues are unique to Japanese women. Intermarried women from a different society might not be under the same influences and might not share the same experiences. However, the approach of identifying the underlying factors that affect individuals’ experiences, as used in this study has no border and can be applied to any cultural groups under investigation.
CHAPTER VII: EPILOGUE

Conducting this research has been a humbling experience for me. It has confronted me with my own assumptions of interracial marriage, my perception of gender equality in my marriage, my attitude as a researcher, and most of all, the question of “What is gender equality?”

The prevalence of interracial relationships among young Japanese women and Caucasian men caught my attention a few years before the commencement of the research proposal writing. Initially, I believed that many of these relationships were mainly based on racial and gender stereotypes, and I perceived them as Caucasian men’s racial exploitation of Asian women. With further literature review, I was later convinced that immigrant women would be at disadvantage in intermarriage, given the difficulties they had in communication, the deprivation of resources, and the lack of social competence. I was cynical about the outcomes of intermarriage and did not think that Asian women would ever acquire equality through intermarriage.

My perspective changed after I had met my husband. In our relationship, I felt that I had experienced tremendous respect and had acquired the equality I desired. My initial assumption about interracial marriage shattered, and I began to wonder how many intermarried women had shared similar experiences with me but were still portrayed inaccurately. I, therefore, expanded my literature review and incorporated positive perspectives on interracial marriage into it. By the time I defended my thesis proposal, I had believed that I had already confronted my assumptions and biases.

Not until I began my interviews with the participants did I realize how many more of my assumptions were yet to be challenged. First, I was shocked to find out how each interview had impacted my marriage. It became evident that the participants and I shared
many similar experiences and they had brought me more insights about my marriage than what I had ever had before. It forced me to re-examine the gender equality in my marriage, and I had never had so many fights with my husband! I then realized that as a researcher, I had completely separated myself from my participants and treated them as “others.” I unknowingly had positioned myself as a “superior outsider” who had a higher level of awareness of gender equality issues and was “qualified” to conduct research on them. Through my interactions with the participants, I realized that as an Asian woman in an interracial marriage, I was one of them and I was part of this phenomenon, despite our different racial backgrounds. The clear border between them and me faded away along with my arrogance.

Second, during the data analysis process, I realized that I had automatically defined gender equality from my own perspective. I became totally confused when presented with different perceptions of gender equality from the participants. I became aware that gender equality was a subjective perception and I was in no place to judge or label any of my participant’s relationship as equal or unequal. The participants’ experiences also showed me how easily we can overlook our partner’s contributions due to our own biases. Such insight led me to open my eyes and to finally see how much sacrifice my husband had made to support me during the entire process of my research.

Third, it became clear to me that I had followed a common assumption existing in literature that traditional gender role practice was equated to inequality. Not only did I find it biased to assume traditional gender role practice as unequal, I also found it impossible to draw a line between “traditional” and “non-traditional” in the first place.

Initially, I perceived myself as a feminist and that this study would adopt a feminist
paradigm, but conducting this research made me realize that I had unconsciously applied Western feminists' notions and perspectives in interpreting a cross-cultural phenomenon. Gaining this awareness led me to become more cautious and thoughtful in interpreting the participants' experiences. I made the effort to avoid judging or labeling the level of gender equality in the participants' marriage, and tried to present their experiences as they were.

Upon the completion of this study, I finally grasped the true meaning and the importance of conducting data collection and analysis simultaneously (Mason, 1996; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Although I made certain efforts to collect more information from some participants based on the insights I derived from other interviews, it was not until I completed the entire data analysis did I see the whole picture of the study and what issues still needed to be addressed.

I realize that the outcome of this study is the participants' subjective interpretations of their reality, rather than an objective reality. Information that is not present in some cases does not necessarily mean that it does not exist. In order to present a reality that is closer to the objective reality, I believe that it is important for researchers to conduct follow-up interviews after the initial analysis is completed.

This study did not only revealed five intermarried Japanese women's experiences and perception of gender equality in their marriage, but also portrayed these five women's stories in their migration journeys - journeys of dreams, struggles, pain, grief, joy, courage, strength, resilience and wisdom.
References


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APPENDIX A

RECRUITMENT NOTICE
APPENDIX B

NEWSPAPER ADVERTISEMENT
APPENDIX C

SUBJECT CONSENT FORM
Consent

I understand that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without jeopardy to my confidentiality or my participation in other projects.

I have received a copy of this consent form for my own records.

I consent to participate in this study.

Subject Signature ______________________ Date __________

Signature of a Witness ______________________ Date __________
APPENDIX D

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION
Demographic Information

Name: _______________________________ Age: _______________________________

Marital Status: single married common law separated divorced

Length of marriage/relationship: _______________________________

Number of children: ___________ Age of Children: _______________________________

Education in Japan: _______________________________

Education in Canada: _______________________________

Current occupation: _______________________________

Hours of employment: ________/week Your income: ________________________/year

If not working, have you worked in Canada before? _____ What occupation? ______

Occupation in Japan: _______________ Years of employment in Japan: __________

Length of staying in Canada: __________ Age when leaving Japan: __________

Current status in Canada: visitor working holiday international student spousal
dependent landed immigrant citizen others _______________________________

How did you get your immigrant status sponsored by my husband independent
immigrant entrepreneur investor others _______________________________

Husband/Partner’s education: _______________________________

Husband/Partner’s occupation: _______________________________

Hours of his employment: ________ His income: ________________________/year

Which country was your husband/partner born? _______________________________

Is English your husband/partner’s first language? _______________________________
APPENDIX E

CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT
Confidentiality Statement

All information related to a participant must be treated as confidential. This information may be written, verbal, or in another form.

Confidentiality extends to everything learned in the exercise of duties in perpetuity.

Any misuse of participant information should be considered a breach of confidentiality.

I understand and agree that in the performance of my duty as a typist or an independent judge, I must hold all participant information in confidence.

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APPENDIX F

ETHICAL REVIEW APPROVAL