Gender and Social Practices in Migration
A case study of Thai women in rural Sweden
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Natasha Alexandra Webster
To my grandmothers:
Jane Bell, Marjorie Nelson,
and Marjorie Webster

Thank you for teaching me
the importance of women’s
stories.
Abstract

Set within discussions of gender, migration and social practices, this thesis explores the ways in which Thai women migrants to Sweden build connections between rural areas through their daily activities. Arriving in Sweden primarily through marriage ties, Thai migrant women are more likely to live in Swedish rural areas than in urban areas. Rural areas are typically not seen as a site of globalization or as receivers of international migrants. In contrast to these perceptions, the case of Thai women migrants in the Swedish countryside reveals a complex and vigorous set of social practices that connect rural Sweden across spatial and temporal scales.

The aim of this study is to explore the ways in which Thai migrant women construct and implement social practices spatially and temporally. Drawing on the life stories of 16 Thai women living in Sweden, along with other sources of empirical data analysed within feminist epistemologies, this thesis discusses: In what ways does gender shape migrant social practices? How are social practices constructed within individual migrant microgeographies? By what means are migrant social practices contextualized by spaces and places?

Thai women migrants are gendered agents of these social practices and are utilizing specific resources, objects and networks to bridge the distances found in their daily lives. The empirical material examined in this thesis points to the importance of women’s everyday social practices in connecting and linking rural areas globally at different spatial and temporal scales.

The results highlight the importance of a translocal perspective to understanding gendered social practices. This study adds to the translocal discussion by demonstrating that social practices are embedded in multiple geographic sites and scales. Thai women migrants, in this study, emerge as significant actors in global countrysides and do the functional work of bringing spaces and places together daily and through their life course.

This thesis consists of an introductory chapter and five papers. The introductory chapter outlines the context and theoretical approaches to understanding Thai migration flows to Sweden. The papers share an emphasis on local sites: homes, workplaces and community. They examine different ways that women construct and build social practices – for example, through food, community projects and in developing their businesses.
Keywords: Gender, social practices, migration, rural, translocalism, microgeographies, mobilities, spatial relations, case study, narrative interviews, life course, feminist epistemology, Thailand, Sweden.
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List of Papers

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Paper II

Paper III
Webster, Natasha and Forsberg, Gunnel (Draft Manuscript). *Spicy Meatballs and Mango Sylt: Exploring translocal food practices in rural Sweden*

Paper IV
Webster, Natasha and Haandrikman, Karen. Thai Women-led Entrepreneurship in Sweden: Critical perspectives on self-employment, Submitted to *Women Studies International Forum*

Paper V
Webster, Natasha. Rural-to-Rural Translocal Practices: Thai Women entrepreneurs in Sweden, Submitted to *Journal of Rural Studies*
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Paper I
NW and KH collaborated and jointly wrote this paper. NW led and analysed the qualitative material and KH led and analysed the quantitative and has access to the PLACE database housed at Uppsala University.

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NW and MAC collaborated and wrote jointly this paper. NW led and analysed material related to Thai migrants and MAC led and analysed material related to East Africa.

Paper III
NW and GF collaborated and jointly wrote this paper. NW led and analysed the material on Thai migrants and GF led and analysed the material on the integration projects.

Paper IV
NW and KH collaborated jointly wrote this paper. NW led and analysed the qualitative material and KH led and analysed the quantitative and has access to the PLACE database housed at Uppsala University.

Paper V
NW is the sole author of this work.
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Introduction

“…I have some Thai friend who to come to visit me… ‘oh how you live here, is nothing here, it is just a field’ I think, yes, it is very good for health. It is so good also for here, I say to them. And I can say, ok, at the beginning I feel is so silent… Vad heter den? [what’s it called?] It is very very silent. And then I start to miss Bangkok. Of course, when I be in Bangkok about 1 or 2, 3 weeks when I back to Sweden. I feel, Ok I back here now, I can breathe very deep. It’s very good air in here! …Every time when I go to Thailand, when you walk out from the airport to the parking, I can feel this, this…this fukt [humidity], this has much fukt, ah, vad heter den?”

Ploy, a Thai woman living in rural Sweden, on May 23, 2010

On any given weekday, Ploy wakes up and gets her children ready for school. They have to catch the train on time in order to get to the nearby town or else she must drive them, throwing her whole schedule off. Having bundled the children off to school, Ploy sits down at her computer, checks her watch to confirm that her mother in Thailand will be home from shopping. She calls her mother and they discuss what her mother bought at the market and what Ploy’s plans are for the day. After the call, Ploy prepares some food for the family supper using sauces from her last trip to Thailand and from the nearby town. She notes that they are running low and she will have to plan a trip to the city to get more. Having prepped the evening meal, she goes out the back door, crosses the lawn to a large converted barn to join her husband and their employees for morning fika.

Ploy and other Thai migrant women who arrive in rural Sweden to be with their Swedish partners begin to build their lives through the process of living in two worlds – Thailand and Sweden. With time, these migrant women construct a daily life through their activities and practices at their homes, in their communities and through their work. With their friends and families they build networks and chains and flows between places. Migrants do this with technology, such as computers and mobile phones; they do this through the goods they buy and share with each other; they do this through building their businesses and raising their children, taking care of parents and family and being part of their local communities in rural Sweden and rural Thailand.

On a daily basis, migrant women coming to Sweden to be with their partners like Ploy, live globally, bridging localities through their day-to-day
activities. Their actions are the building blocks of a world becoming linked, connected and merged. Through the mundane and ordinary grind of day-to-day living, migrant women are actors in the mechanisms of a globalizing world.

Thai migrants are actors, linking and traversing rural areas in Thailand and Sweden on a daily basis. Women migrants, such as Ploy and the other Thai women whose stories are explored in this work, build their lives in the context of inter-continental migration every day. Through daily activities, Thai migrants bring together social practices across spaces and places. The flows and connections built through social practices exist in time – daily, monthly, and through the life course – and they exist in space and place – rural areas in Sweden and Thailand.

Through exploring gender and social practices in migration, this thesis examines the role of individual activities in constructing a globalizing world. Starting from the premise that women’s activities are important in how spaces and places are constructed, this research presents a picture of how Thai migrant women in rural Sweden are actors and agents in the creation of a globalizing countryside.

Research Scope

This thesis examines the daily practices of Thai migrant women living in rural Sweden by examining the role of social practices, seen through various activities, in different individual geographies: the home, the workplace and the community. The collection of papers united by this comprehensive introduction (kappa), while diverse theoretically, share a gendered approach to understanding the role of migration in shaping women’s lives.

Building on previous research on social practices and ‘doing’ gender, the day-to-day activities of migrant women form the base of this study. Studies that emphasize the role of women’s activities highlight the ways women shape and construct negotiation, resistance and change through social practices. The importance of nuance in gender studies lies in the multiplicity of strategies that women utilize in shaping their world. While these approaches are generally accepted in women and gender studies, there are growing calls for the individual level of analysis that highlights these nuances in rural studies (Paniagua 2016). Migration is integral to the production of social practices, yet the role of individual actions within migration needs further investigation (Holdsworth 2013).

Migration and rural studies, while quite different from each other, share a common tradition of approaching studies from structural and large-scale and cohort analysis perspectives. These approaches provide strong overviews of their respective fields, yet there remains a need to understand the differences of experience for people who are migrants and for those living in rural areas.
The experiences of individuals can shed light on how people engage with structure and their agency during migration (Ayala & Murga 2016; González Ramos & Torrado 2015; Kilkey et al. 2014; Charrad, 2010; Silvey 2004ab; McNay 2000). Given the accepted understanding in geography that space and place are relational (Massey 2005), it is largely uncontested in the migration and mobility literature that movement implies change. However, the nature or mechanism of change in daily lives remains relatively unexplored. Holdsworth (2013) calls for academic studies to unpack and explore the nature of change in migration and how social practices change through migration. She calls for a better understanding of what change means for the individual. Migration, as a disruptive act, changes the ways people do things, what the significance of activities is and why individuals engage in social practices (Trentmann 2009). This suggests that, by exploring the social practices of migrants, we can better understand how migrants experience migration and the role that migration plays at the scale of localities.

Feminist theories and epistemologies offer a way to explore how individuals experience daily life as migrants situated within a context. Feminist perspectives are not new to migration studies or rural studies. In migration, women have emerged as a central focus (Green 2012; Pajnik & Bajt 2010). Likewise, studies examining gender in rural areas are increasingly common (Tibe Bonifacio 2014). These trends can be seen through gender mainstreaming and other studies that emphasize the importance of understanding the role of women’s activities. Nonetheless, gaps remain in understanding how women experience living as a migrant and how they relate to the places they arrive in.

Feminists, along with migration and rural scholars, continue to explore ways to understand how women’s individual stories can shed light on comprehending the role of migration in shaping localities. Gender perspectives have the potential to offer new insights into large processes like migration; as well as insights into inequality in relation to the state and belonging (Schmidt 2011; Kitiarsa 2008), trends in transnational marriage (Morén-Alegret 2011) and how global hierarchies are translated in social norms (Lundström & Windance 2011). Gendered perspectives on migrant women experience’s nuanced perspectives on how gender and migration become intertwined through social practices.

This thesis falls within these discussions by exploring the role of social practices in daily life and how social practices emerge from and through migration. It explores how women live as migrants and build social practices to support themselves, and how they engage with and resist norms around them. The perspectives explored in this work address gaps in the literature examining the individual in time and place.
The case of Thai migrant women

Thai migrants are of special interest in studying gender and social practices in migration, as they are a distinct immigrant group in Sweden. Firstly, they are predominantly a rural migrant group and, as I will show, they often come from rural areas in Thailand. As a result, their daily practices highlight rural-to-rural relations. Secondly, Thai migrants, who are predominantly female, come as marriage migrants to Swedish men. This gives them unprecedented access to local communities, and in many ways their integration is relatively quick. Thirdly, Thai migrants are over-represented in the small-scale entrepreneurship which is usually identity-based, for example food or massage, and thus signals ongoing social spheres between receiving and sending regions.

Thai women in Sweden offer a way to explore women’s gendered social practices as they are produced through day-to-day lives, for example in workplaces, homes, in community, and throughout their life course. Translocalism, as a concept, is an emerging area of interest in geography whereby different localities become intertwined through migrants’ agencies. The multiplicity of social practices combined with diverse locations pose ongoing challenges when looking at the ways in which migrant women, who are situated in contexts and moving within and between spaces and places, create gendered social practices. In other words, women migrants are neither neutral nor equally able to act. Yet despite these constraints, women forge, construct and build social practices that are carved out of their migration experiences.

Significantly, the case of Thai women in Sweden, due to the gendered character of the flow, can shine light on how women’s gendered social practices operate throughout migration and in multiple geographic settings. Gendered perspectives in geography encompass the theoretical and empirical understandings of spatial activities while challenging masculine norms of knowledge production (Moss & Al-Hindi 2008; Schough 2002; Rose 1993). To date, a gendered translocal study has not been fully explored, and this collection of papers seeks to contribute to understanding how feminist discussions can be bolstered by a translocal perspective; and vice versa.

The actions and means of creating social practices are the central focus of this study. Working from the assumption that activities are deliberate and decisive, women’s social practices become a mechanism to explore how gender is practiced and performed. Gendered social practices are embedded within the tensions between individuals and their geographies.
Research Aim and Research Questions

Emerging from discussions within gender theory, spatial relations, and migration the aim of this study is to explore the ways in which Thai migrant women construct and implement social practices spatially and temporally.

Through the case study of Thai migrant women in Sweden, I ask the following research questions:

- Question 1: In what ways does gender shape migrant social practices? (Answered primarily in Papers I, II, IV and V)
- Question 2: How are social practices constructed within individual migrant micro-geographies? (Answered primarily in Papers II, III and IV)
- Question 3: By what means are migrant social practices contextualized by spaces and places? (Answered primarily in Papers I, IV and V)

To study these questions, this thesis presents five research papers which are anchored by this comprehensive introduction (the kappa). The comprehensive introduction puts forward an umbrella framework outlining the theoretical approaches, methodology and methods, and a discussion of results. The results discussed explore an overarching approach to understanding social practices as translocal in migration, while the papers examine applied examples of social practices. Hence the results section in the comprehensive introduction is a broader discussion of how the different perspectives and theoretical approaches found in the papers can be tied together as a unified whole. The following five articles explore different aspects of the case study of Thai migrant women. Each article approaches the case study from a different perspective, yet they are part of a shared case study which is an examination of social practices, and of gender. When these various perspectives are pulled together, they reveal that a gendered translocal perspective highlights the activities of migrant women in their daily lives.
Research Context

This section provides a contextual background of the case study of women’s migration between Thailand and Sweden, as well as addressing some of the gendered issues within the migration flows between the two countries.

As a migrant-sending country, there is a vast body of literature focusing on domestic and international migration from Thailand. A range of topics from brokering and labour (Hedberg 2016; Lindquist 2010), sex trafficking (Yea 2012, Spanger 2013); domestic service and mobility (Yeoh & Huang 2010), to more recent concerns of migration stemming from environmental degradation (Bylander 2016) highlight the diversity of perspectives in understanding migration in the Southeast Asia region.

While acknowledging the different approaches and perspectives regarding migration studies, for the purposes of this thesis, this context specifically relates to Thai-Swedish migration.

Migration between Sweden and Thailand

Thailand, located in Southeast Asia, is statistically one of the leading tourist destinations in the world; more than 400 000 Swedes travel to Thailand annually (Webster & Haandrikman 2016; Swedish Embassy Interview February 2012). Thailand is the second-largest economy in the Southeast Asian region and relies heavily on international trade; the European Union is the third-largest trading partner with the region (ASEAN2014/105). Despite being well-situated economically in the Southeast Asian region, strong regional inequalities within Thailand have fostered a unique migration pattern within the country which has global implications, particularly for Sweden.

It has been well documented that internal migration patterns in Thailand are a result of uneven rural-urban development within the Thai state (Mills 2012; 1997). Northeast Thailand, Thailand’s poorest region, is a sending jurisdiction domestically and internationally due to this uneven development and inequalities. It was clear through interviews conducted in Thailand with key academics and government officials that out-migration to domestic and international destinations has a long history (Pholphirul & Rukumnuaykit 2010) (Figure 1). With growing tourism and international trade centring on the Greater Bangkok Region and the South (in the case of tourism), migrants choose to leave poor and underdeveloped regions to seek gainful and higher-
paying employment in the urban and tourist areas (Brody 2006). Furthermore, rural areas are often associated with being backward and non-modern (baan nook), which has a negative connotation in Thailand. These perceptions parallel similar discourses that shape rural Sweden (Eriksson 2010; Brody 2006).

Figure 1: Typical houses in Thailand. Migration is often a household strategy in rural areas of Thailand (Photo credit: C. Maneepong 2015)

Issan – the colloquial name for Northeast Thailand – borders Laos and Cambodia, and many people from this region continue to maintain Laotian language and customs. While poverty has been reduced overall in Thailand since the 1980s, Issan remains the poorest and most rural region in Thailand (World Bank 2015; Jitsuchon & Richter 2007). Issan, as a plateau, is characterized by dry, poor cropland and is heavily populated; approximately 22 million people live in the region, making it the most populous region in Thailand (Figure 2).

The majority of women in this study come from rural Issan. Many women begin to migrate due to the poor economic situation of the region – with migration culture built up over time in rural communities (Kaewmala interview, March 2012). Furthermore, rural areas in Thailand have adapted to mobility-induced effects, sparking an ongoing trend (Rigg & Salamanca 2011). Issan women are especially vulnerable to migration according to the Goodwill Foundation, an NGO empowering disadvantaged women in Thailand. Migration is an important social and economic strategy for women in
this region in order to support their families. Women and their daughters are important managers of Issan households (Potter 1977). Curran et al. (2005) elaborate:

Thai rural women have long played an important role in household economies. They work next to their husbands and brothers in the rice fields and are often described as ‘holding the purse strings’ with regards to financial planning. Also many historic and ethnographic studies describe women’s relationships with their husbands as egalitarian (pp. 231).

‘Daughter duty’ is an important gendered driver of migration from rural areas in Southeast Asia (Angeles & Sunanta 2009; Sandy 2007). Women, in particular the eldest daughter, are responsible for the care of her parents and even their siblings. Responding to these pressures, most Thai women who do migrate begin by doing so within Southeast Asia, for example to Bangkok or the southern tourist areas, but also to Singapore, Japan or Taiwan. From these regions, women in many cases begin the process of monetary and social remittances which more often than not continue after migration to Sweden and other European countries (Mix & Piper 2003; Osaki 2003; Chantvanich 2001). Rairin, one of the women interviewed for this thesis, sends approximately 1000 Swedish Kronor a month to her parents in Issan and has purchased them a home. Indeed, 14 of the informants interviewed in Sweden originally came from the northeast, though many of them, as is typical, had already migrated within Thailand prior to moving overseas. From a translocal perspective, this internal migration pattern is important to show the diversity that exists in migration stories. Additionally, studies have shown that many Thai migrants’ identities are tied to their village or region rather than to the Thai nation-state, strengthening the argument for a locally-based study rather than a transnational study (Angeles & Sunanta 2009).

Turning to Sweden, there are approximately 35,000 Thai-born people in Sweden (SCB, 2016). This is a highly gendered migration flow, 78% of Thai migrants in Sweden are women (Webster & Haandrikman 2016). Similar woman-dominated migration flows from Thailand can be found in other countries: for example, 67% of Thai immigrants to Australia are women (DIAC 2014), 72% to The Netherlands (Suksomboon 2008), and 80% to Austria (Butratana & Trupp 2014). In the United Kingdom, marriage migration is the explanation for the majority of new British citizens from Thailand (Mai Sims 2012). Thais living in Sweden represent just over 2% of the foreign-born population, making them the 13th largest immigrant group in the country. Of the Thai women in a relationship, 84% are partnered with a Swedish man, and Thai women are supplanting Finnish women as the primary non-native partner choice (For deeper discussion – see Paper I).
Figure 2: Map of Thailand showing the Issan region. Issan, located in Northeast Thailand, is a migration sending region in Thailand. (Map source: Markalexander100 via Wikipedia, licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0)
Niedomysl et al. (2010) contend that many of the marriages between Swedes and Thais are the result of face-to-face encounters during Swedish vacations to the Southeast Asian country. Generally, Swedish men meet Thai women, often migrants from Issan, in the Southern tourist areas. Figure 3 shows the distribution of Thai people in Sweden in year 2008, and one can see a strong trend towards the rural and Northern counties. Thai migrant settlement pat-
terns in Sweden differ from the general immigration trends, indicating a different kind of migration. Transnational marriage by rural Western men to women from developing countries is a documented and highly stereotyped process (Morén-Alegret 2011; Nordin 2007; Glowsky 2007). Öst et al. (2009) have found that transnational marriage migration in Sweden has a U-shaped trend, with the most heavily rural and most heavily urban recruiting partners from abroad but for very different reasons: lack of choice (rural, poverty) versus many choices (urban, educated). There is a rich literature breaking down these processes from global hegemonies and gender perspectives (see for example Pande 2015; Faier 2014; Parreñas 2011; Kitiarsa 2008; Lugones 2007; Constable 2005, 2003).

![Figure 5: A small but colourful Thai food truck is not an unusual sight in Sweden. The owner of this business was not interviewed by the author (author, 2016).](image)

Thai women in Sweden have high rates of employment five years after arrival, and they are involved in a variety of sectors. However, they are predominantly found in the food and services industries (Figure 4). The women interviewed in this study do match the results from other studies showing that migrant women are employed predominantly in the service and food industries. High rates of labour-force participation suggest successful integration, or at the very least, access to networks to garner employment. Thai women in Sweden represent a diverse and dynamic immigrant population shedding light both on immigration processes and integration, but also on how translocal linkages are developed. In Thailand, more than 50% of all small-medium enterprises are women-led (Thakur & Walsh 2013), and Thai women have one of the highest rates of entrepreneurship in the world (Hatcher & Terjesen 2007). Small-scale entrepreneurialism (Figure 5), such as street vending, is an important strategy for Thai women to earn income and is part of their social-economic practices (Maneepong and Walsh 2013).
Moreover, Thai women outside of Thailand continue to engage in entrepreneurial practices (for more discussion, see Papers IV and V).

Thailand, trafficking and the sex industries

The Vietnam War era was a pivotal moment in Western discourses regarding Southeast Asian women, and Thai women in particular. It has been well documented that the American presence in Thailand during this period, which was strongly concentrated in Issan, led to the development and growth of the sex industry so prevalent today (Truong 1990; Tosakul Interview February 2012). During this time, transnational marriage and prostitution became associated as simultaneous processes (Cohen 2003). Despite Thailand’s economic transition and increased education among its women, prostitution is still a viable and lucrative option for many young women despite being technically illegal. Sex work is a complicated system of exploitation in which both the sex worker and the man can use their positions to exploit each other based on local and global power structures (Birch 2015; Faier 2014, Brennan 2004). Historic masculinities, coupled with stereotypes that Thai women are mild-mannered and traditional, are an important part of discussions around transnational marriages (Maher & Lafferty 2014; Howard 2009). In a 2010 New York Times article (Bernstein 2010), one Western man married to a Thai woman describes his view: “Thai women are a lot like women in America were 50 years ago”, implying that Thai women are pliable and dedicated to their husbands. Thanadda Sawangduean (2011), a former Thai prostitute and winner of the prestigious Chommanard Book Prize, explains that trafficking is a complicated nexus of agency, consent and exploitation. She writes:

I believe that women who do this are very brave. It takes guts for them to leave their homeland to work abroad. The tame ones wouldn’t dare go anywhere even with the promise of an attractive job (pp. 112).

In Southeast Asia, prostitution is an option for many women for financial gain and social mobility, and most importantly it can be seen from multiple subjectivities (Sandy 2007; Skeldon 2000). EMPOWER, a Thai NGO supporting sex workers, estimates that there are 200 000 to 300 000 prostitutes in Thailand. Trafficking is a gendered issue in Southeast Asia; the majority of people trafficked globally are women (McGregor Perry & McEwing 2013). According to humantrafficking.org, Thailand is a ‘source, transit, and destination’ country for trafficked women; furthermore, many women are trafficked to Thailand from the greater Asian Region (Department of State, 2015). Prostitution is not the only kind of trafficking to which women are subjected in Southeast Asia. Recently, the fishing industry in Thailand has
been exposed for human trafficking and brutal treatment of immigrants from the Southeast Asian region (Service & Palmstrom 2012).

Feminist scholars have struggled with binaries of arranged versus romantic love marriages and how these relate to trafficking (Patico 2010, Mix & Piper 2003). During my interview with Dr. Supang Chantavanich, Director of the Asian Migration Centre at Chulalongkorn University, Thailand, she argued most marriages between Thais and Swedish men should be considered a form of trafficking because of the inherent socio-economic inequalities between the partners. The prostitute and Thai women’s connection to the field is not an exception; rather, it is a central part of the Western imagination and the production of moral standards (Hubbard & Sanders 2003; Grewal & Kaplan 2001). Moreover, discourses of love and intimacy in migration are often bound with legal legitimacy (Ahlstedt 2016). Concerns do exist that some marriages are not legitimate and are, in fact, cases of human trafficking in disguise. According to the ROKS (Riksorganisationen för kvinnojourer och tjejerjourer i Sverige) 515 women were imported into Sweden in 2008 under the guise of a marriage visa, and many of them were Thai (ROKS 2010). Other reports show many Thai women are being tricked into the Swedish sex industry and, according to the Stockholm police service; there are approximately 90 Thai massage parlours in the city offering sexual services (The Local, September 21 2010). According to a survey in Malmö, one in five Thai massage parlours offer ‘happy endings’ (The Local, August 8 2013). In 2010, Länstyrelsen Värmland (county administrative board) published a report in 2010 entitled “Isolerad Kränkt Utkastad” (Isolated, violated and thrown out) describing the situation of 12 immigrant women abused in Värmland. Other trends of violence towards Thai migrants are documented in Europe (Pravattiyagul 2014). Awareness of the problems is growing, and in 2011, the Royal Thai Embassy in Stockholm opened a 24-hour hotline for abused Thai women to call and seek help (Sveriges Radio, October 24 2011). While actions are falling in place, transnational prostitution is increasing in Sweden (Häggström 2016; RPS 2012). Notwithstanding the definitions of trafficking and prostitution, it is clear that global gendered hegemonies play a central role in perceiving this migration flow and this has impacts on the daily lives of Thai women living in Sweden.

This research is not about prostitution or trafficking (see methods chapter for in-depth discussion on how women were contacted). The women who participated in this study came willingly to Sweden, but the reality of other women’s experiences has shaped this research and our conversations, as seen through the discussions of sexual violence in Paper IV, for example. I am aware of the real challenges, threats and abuses experienced by many Thai women in Sweden (Häggström 2016; Fernbrant et al. 2014; Roks 2010). These very real injustices and hardships women experience throughout their migration process form an important underpinning to this study, and failing to acknowledge them would do a disservice to my research and, even more
importantly, to the communities, the women, and their children who live with these discourses and violence.

The linkages between Thailand and Sweden are many and are reinforced by the familial connections which develop over time. Driven by tourism from Sweden and uneven spatial development in Thailand, transnational marriage is a gendered migration flow between the two countries. Thai migrant women begin their migration journeys by leaving the Northeast, an economically impoverished region; they often have an internal migrant history (in Thailand or other areas in East Asia) prior to moving to Europe. Generally speaking, Thai women fare well economically in Sweden as seen through employment levels (see Papers I and IV, V), and rich community lives (see Papers II and III).
Theoretical Background

In this section, I will provide a theoretical background to my case study of Thai women through whom I explore how migration creates gendered social practices in the everyday. The section begins by introducing the principle concepts that are common to this thesis. First, this section outlines the basic premises of social practices before turning to a discussion of how the concept relates to geography and gender. I also introduce translocalism as the base for my conceptual findings. The section concludes with a brief discussion of how the concepts are applied and explored in this thesis.

Social practices

Social practices are constructed, employed and replicated by individuals every day and everywhere. They can encompass a range of activities, for example, cooking or working, performed by an individual physically and mentally on a routine basis. Practices construct the everyday.

Practices are a social activity which is contextualized. That is, social practices are an activity or way of behaving that are shared or collectively understood by those in shared context. Performed by an individual or group, a social practice is specific to a place and time and is understood and observable to the individuals who perform the social practice and to those who understand it (Reckwitz 2002). Practices are organized actions, tasks and projects (Schatzki 2002). Social practices are important both for what they share and for what they do not share (Shove et al. 2012). Through the latter, practices are formed and take hold or conversely become discarded (Shove et al. 2012). In other words, social practices are never static and are continuously developed by individuals and groups. Thus, social practices can be understood as flexible and mutable.

A social practice perspective brings to the fore the ways that mobilities are sustained as an ongoing project (Holdsworth 2013). Migrants, as active actors, build and sustain social practices as part of the migration experience. Practices can also be disrupted by migration, reworked through migration and, interestingly, continued through migration. Consequently, social practices have the potential to reveal how migration forms social relations across time and space.
Conceptualizing social practices in time and space

Most significantly for geographers, social practices can also be understood as spatial (Massey 1994). Being spatial involves different kinds and scales of geographies. Scale is not unproblematic in geography (Marston et al. 2005), and feminist geographers have led some of these critiques. The scale of analysis in the geography being examined is of importance to the study of women for several reasons. Scale conceals who is seen within an analysis and whose voices are heard, argue feminist geographers, thus making the question of scale in geographic studies important (Silvey 2004b). The home, workplace and community activities are local expressions of material and immaterial practicalities and symbolisms. Consequently, highly localized sites, or microgeographies, are important to understanding how individuals create their social practices (Elwood & Martin 2000).

These different sites can also reveal the temporal character of social practices. The organization of days and years temporally constitute practices (Shove et al. 2012; Shove et al. 2009). Time reveals a great deal about social practices (Southerton 2006). Time spent represents a significant commitment to the practices involved, for instance in kitchens and households. Days, years and life courses organized across these practices create durability and propel changing practices. Different time scales – daily, annually, or even spontaneous events – link and integrate social practices throughout individual lives and as a collective, within social groups (Shove et al. 2009) Time is integral to exploring social practices in geography as individuals move through space and place temporally.

Microgeographies, as small sites of social interaction, can give insights into the potential ways individuals construct and implement social practices in spaces and places. The home, for instance, reveals the decisions, the constructs and the symbols built by a migrant throughout their ordinary and everyday practices. Butcher (2010) states:

Home is, therefore, more than a material object; it consists of imagination, routinized everyday practice, relationship networks, and representation imbued with personal and social meaning, cultural ideals and values (pp. 24 -25).

Similarly, workplaces and community events are imbued with personal and social meanings, ideals and values. Notwithstanding their small size, these sites are physically and socially constructed by individuals. Microgeographies are sites of negotiation. These micro-geographies reveal different and complex aspects of migrant experiences; for example, the home can be a site of freedom or of oppression for women (Silvey 2004b). What these sites do reveal are the complexities of social practices and the significance of social practices in shaping gendered experiences for migrant women.

Moving away from small, or micro, geographic sites, larger geographic concepts embedded in understanding space and place do remain important to the production of social practices. These concepts play an important role in
shaping and contextualizing the social practices studied in this dissertation. Rural areas, themselves, are formed from the threefold concept of imaginative, material and practices (Halfacree 2006). Traditionally, viewed as bounded in territory and low on spatial hierarchies, rural areas were thought to be mediated through the nation-state or even urban areas. Calls to expand this limited view of the rural have been made, and many studies are taking up the notion of global countrysides (Woods, 2007). Within this perspective, the rural is understood as socially constructed and formed in relation to other entities (Woods 2011). Conventionally, rural places are constructed in relation to their urban counterparts despite evidence of broader spatial networks that reach beyond these boundaries (Tibe Bonifacio 2014; Askins 2009). Rural areas need to be understood as an arena producing and acting within global processes and trends (Cheshire et al., 2013; Hedberg et al., 2012; Aguayo, 2008). These perspectives unleash the rural from binary and nationalistic discourses (Sörlin 1999; Cloke & Little 1987) and open rural spaces to a range of geographic relations.

The relational turn in rural studies has unfolded to position rurality as part of global patterns (Heley & Jones, 2012). The concept of rural, itself, is a social practice. Moreover, the ongoing construction of rural is made through individual practices (Walsh & Jones 2016). Rural areas are integral in the practice of constructing nation-states (Horton 2008). In these constructions, rural areas are often positioned as the heartlands of culture, traditions, and authenticity (Holloway 2007; Garland & Chakraborti 2006; Neal 2002). Certainly, rural areas have historically been diverse and multicultural (Pancelli et al. 2009; Askins 2009).

Rural scholars have called for further investigation into the relational nature of rural spaces and for researchers to challenge embedded assumptions. Through rural social practices, we can see the rural as globally connected – apart from its urban and state counterparts. In his 2012 editorial, Michael Woods identifies the need to study the ‘intensification and reconfiguration of global mobility patterns from, to and across rural space including rural-to-urban, urban-to-rural, and rural-to-rural migration’ (2012 pp. 2).

There are connections between the construction of space, place, time and individual social practice (Main & Sandoval 2015). Space and time offers ways to understand social practices as shared, produced, co-constructed and collectively understood. Social practices are enacted in all sorts of spaces – ranging from an office to a region – which are linked temporally. Through space and time, social practices emerge as a way to understand how people construct meaning in their everyday lives. The use of micro-geographies, which are the places and spaces of lived daily social practices, has the potential to counter oppressions obscured at other scales of analysis (Bastia 2014).

In other words, by seeing these small sites as multiple geographies of space and time and the contradictions which coexist with those, spatial-temporal configurations can be illuminated. By using sites not predominantly posi-
tioned in transnational hierarchies, women’s experiences may be uncovered as a component of geographic relations (Devasahayam et al. 2004).

Gender and women in social practices

‘Doing Gender’ is an important theoretical development which argues for the socially constructed view of gender (West & Zimmerman 1987), whereby gender is created through social practices. By ‘doing gender’, gender is always being made and in process. The activity of creating gender is individual and collective. Gender operates on different levels or scales and thus, approaching gender from these different levels of analysis reveals different constructions of social practices. In summary, gender is a set of social relations which are material and symbolic (McDowell 1999).

Masculinity and femininity can be understood as a form of social practice which is gendered (Paechter 2003, 2006). Acker (1990), in her work on gendering organizations, highlighted meanings and identities as tied to concepts of masculine and feminine. Through examining work places or entrepreneurialism, for example, migrant women are revealed as actors challenging these norms (Pettersson & Hedberg 2013; Kang 2010). In these, we can see gender as a normative performance. Performances are contingent on locality, as seen, for example, in the local gender contract approach (Hirdman 1990), and are also situational, for example, through gender roles in the workplace.

In this study the lines between women, femininity and gender can be blurred. Gender is important to migration because, as an organizing principle of social lives, gender reveals potential opportunities, restrictions and life changes. More than about being women migrants, gender becomes central to the social practices which form everyday lives.

Gender, intersectionality and mobility

Working from the position of gender as a social construction, it is important to consider the role of geography in the social construction of gender. Spaces and places provide cues for social practices and so shape gender. Through social practices, gender and space become mutually constituted and interconnected (McDowell 1999).

Gender as a social relation is performed in various settings: workplaces, home, cityscapes, rural areas and so on. These spaces and places are key constituents in shaping social processes. Work on gender and rural areas highlights the co-constituent character of social practices with spaces and places (Little 2002). Exploring women’s daily lives in rural areas has revealed how gender is central to many rural practices. Women’s social practices transform the rural in ways that cannot be fully understood without
including gender in the analysis (Hedberg 2016; Osterud 2014; Grimsrud 2011). Space as a social relation is experienced differently.

Studying women’s issues can be approached from a variety of perspectives, but each approach reveals a gendered relation to social practices (Moss & Al-Hindi 2008). Gender reveals the social processes embedded in migration. Through social practices in mobility, questions of positionalities, identities, power and other social categories come to the fore in how gender and spaces are related to women’s everyday lived experiences. To take up the everyday requires attention to the multiplicity of women’s identities across time and space.

Intersectionality is a way to understand how different social categories gender, race, sexuality and other important forms of identity, overlap (Valentine 2007). Intersectionality is a means to add complexity to analysis beyond one set of categories by acknowledging and problematizing that individuals and society are made up of multiple identities that are contextual and situational. The relations between categories and within categories are considered integral to an intersectional analysis. This once-radical way of thinking has now become firmly entrenched in academic thinking, while at the same time it has been critiqued for being overly vague and open-ended (Davis 2008).

Mobility and migration are inherently complex and thus challenging to the construction of intersectional categories. Recent developments have shown an increased sensitivity to gender and migration (Bastia 2014; Maher and Lafferty 2014); yet strong calls to address the gender-neutral norms of migration remain relevant (Silvey 2004; Pessar & Mahler 2003).

Ahmed (2007/2008) argues that specific kinds of bodies can be at home in certain places; that they are oriented by their surroundings. Yet tensions are spread unevenly through social fields meaning that bodies get caught in social meanings, along with spaces and places. Thus it is not just a feminine body which migrates or becomes part of the migration process, but a gendered set of relations embodied with meanings and symbols. Further, there are linkages between the social construction of an individual and the construction of geographical spaces. Not to be confused with a nature or nurture debate, the relation between space, place and individual is a complicated question in geography and becomes even more so when interplayed with migration.

One of the challenges stemming from studying social practices in mobility is it is disordered, complicated and in perpetual motion. Individual identities and categories share these ambiguities: “Transnational subjects live in, and connect with, several communities simultaneously, both at ‘home’ and ‘away’, meaning that their identities are not limited by location” (Leonard 2008, pp. 47). In this sense, social practices do not need to be bounded or rooted by location. Consequently, the individual’s perceptions, practices and performances need to be considered in order to understand how social practices in migration are related to spaces and places.
By focusing on daily practices and materials rather than one-off events, researchers can respond to the relational call within migration studies which seeks to address the practice of mobility (Holdsworth 2013). While Salazar (2011) maintains that fixity, or being place-bound, is also central to understanding the experience of mobility. This fixity is a necessary part of the methodological process, as interviews and participant observation were place-specific. These contradictions within social practices in mobility lead to practical and theoretical constraints.

Translocalism and social practices

Globalization, as a theoretical concept, emerged as early as the 1960s but became mainstream throughout the social sciences and in popular media by the 1980s (Voisey & O’Riordan 2001; Iyer 2001). Globalization theory went beyond the nation-state and interaction among nation-states – the previous scale of analysis in many disciplines – and challenged approaches to understanding the world economically, politically and socially. Transnationalism manifested, according to Kearney (1995), a way to explore how national territories guided these processes in relation to their own territories and with other nation-states. Transnationalism stepped out of the abstract focus of globalization to include other scales of engagement both globally and locally.

Translocalism emerges, unsurprisingly, from these transnational approaches to understanding globalization. Primarily a geographic concept, the term ‘translocal’ was coined by anthropologist Appadurai in the 1990s. Appadurai’s influential texts, Modernity at Large (1996) and Sovereignty without Territoriality (1996), lifted the role and conceptualization of the local from a limited and static concept into a site of global interactions. In these, localities were lifted from being seen only as reflections of globalization to also being understood as significant drivers of globalization. As outlined by Brickell and Datta (2011) in their seminal text on translocalism, the 1990s marked a period of robust debate on how to conceive deterritorialisation and situatedness within transnationalism. These debates, they argue, started the trajectory towards translocalism.

The ways in which to understand mobility and the local are much debated within the field of translocalism. There are several different ways of approaching the relationship between the local and the global. Greiner and Sakdapolrak (2013) in their literature review explore the main thrusts of the concept and reach the conclusion that “authors use translocality to capture complex social-spatial interactions in a holistic, actor-orientated and multi-dimensional understanding” (pp. 376). Unlike globalization or transnational theories which are driven by movements, for example, youth culture, or pro-
cesses, such as structures like the European Union; translocalism takes an agency-centred approach.

Translocalism presents a means to conceptualize how ambiguous kinds of mobility – from individuals to objects and materials – co-create relational geographies. This perspective is supported by the work of John Urry, who was the leading theorist on mobilities. For Urry (2007), mobility is supported by a multitude of structures such as migrants and the material and physical world. That is, it is supported through infrastructure, such as airplanes, and tools, such as mobile phones and the internet. Objects, materials and other tools become meaningful through different types of mobilities (Urry 2007). Through a translocal lens, the construction of meaning offers a unique analytical and methodological framework for understanding the social practices of migrant women.

Translocal communities, Page (2011) argues, are outcomes of movement and are channels of mobility. Central to the concept is the notion that an individual’s relationships with the spatial world are not fixed; they are always in motion. People are agents who connect places through their social practices. Thus, local is always changing, flexible, relative and contextual (Siim & Assmuth, 2016), and is produced from a series of social practices. These social practices are connected within and through mobilities and are socially constructed by actors.

Hall and Datta (2010) give a concrete example of these dynamics in their 2010 study of street signage in a neighbourhood in London which reveals how translocal linkages are produced through small but significant daily actions and symbols. Streets signs, or other products or practices, become ways to communicate sameness and difference. These markers in the landscape highlight the flows of people and economics while pointing out the uneven power relations found in the lived environment. Hall and Datta (2010) describe the visualization of translocal as a type of language “that connects a variety of spaces and places and puts them in close physical or imaginative proximity without necessarily producing a hierarchy of the nature of identity or difference” (pp. 74).

Individual social practices which occur across place and space are translocal (Wise & Velayutham 2008). They are constructed by migrants through technologies, flows of people, goods, materials, food, and social cultural practices (Woods 2011; Appadurai 1996). Through materials, symbols and other practices, the social practices of women become part of geographic relations. The construction of linking social practices implements local-to-local relations. Spaces and places have unique translocal connection based on their own particular characteristics and subjectivities. Local is seen as a dynamic site that is neither central nor marginalized (Hall & Datta 2010).

Translocal social relations are found in everyday practices and are not necessarily large-scale in their articulation (Rios & Watkins 2015). What distinguishes these social relations from other practices is they are accessed
locally through social practices (Qureshi 2006). The practices are created from a “complex intermingling of a multitude of local worlds” (Hall & Datta 2010, pp. 70). Intermingling of local worlds suggests a level of hybridity and mix, a blending of the ‘here’ and ‘there’. However, translocal practices are much more complicated than the mixing of paint colours. It is the collective reimagining and transformative work done through the collective everyday imagination (Appadurai 1996). Consequently, localities and even micro-geographies become sites of translocal social practices. Workplaces, homes or community events are similarly imbued with personal and social meanings, ideals and values.

Summary to theoretical perspectives

Social practices encompass the material – such as clothing or food – and immaterial identities, culture or symbols that co-construct meaning through the actions of an individual; thus they are both practical and conceptual (Wilhelm 2008). Daily social practices – the mundane day-to-day accumulation of little actions – reveal the ways that migrant women construct and interpret the world through migration. Gender simultaneously shapes and is shaped by social practices. These collections of individual activities become social practices which in turn become shared and collective knowledge creating social order (Reckwitz 2002). Hence, social practices are situated within social and economic context. Examining everyday social practices has the potential to reveal the ways in gender shapes the context of migration.

Women’s social practices create meaningful places, materially and imaginarily, which speak to the ways we understand the relations between gender and geography (Rose 2003). Understanding women’s daily lives is a means to explore how women resist, construct, negotiate and build their lives as migrant agents (Andrijasevic 2010). Massey’s (2005) assertion that place is not a point on a map but is rather an integration of space and time emphasizes movement and the complexity of individual intersections within spaces and places. Translocal perspective provides a geographical vocabulary to understanding how women interconnect spaces and places through social practices. Thus, within migrant social practices lies the potential to explore how migration is central to relational processes. Migration, as part of a bundle of social practices, forms the perspective that migration is part of the constructed lived experience. In other words, migration is not a singular event but is instead a process. Migrants continuously construct social practice within and through translocal social spheres.

Social practices, illuminated through individual migrant experiences, may reveal much of the functionality of migration in daily life, and furthermore have the potential to shed light on rural migrant experiences. In particular, a translocal scale of analysis can uncover the role of context in social practic-
es. For migrants, and especially for those in non-normative migration contexts such as rural areas, these contexts require further study. The main concepts – social practices, gender and migration – complement each other to create understanding of the plurality of migrant women’s experiences.
Methodology

This research project is a case study which starts from the position that the migrant is a subjective author of their migration story. The study weaves together methodological considerations of social practice and gender as a case study of women’s migration. Data is derived from 16 narrative interviews with Thai migrant women, population register data, and observations and these data sources are supplemented by 25 contextual interviews.

Case study research

Case study research emerges out of a post-positivist perspective (Hyett et al. 2014). The purpose of case study research is to gain in-depth understandings of a case. Inherent to this approach is the notion that a case study produces a deep understanding of real-world behaviour and meanings (Yin 2012). Case studies are appropriate for contemporary events and focus upon the individual, organizational, social and political phenomena involved in each case (Yin 1994).

Case study research is purposed to answer ‘how’ and exploratory research questions. It should produce a situated knowledge (Lund 2014) which tells a story about a specific case. A story is not universal nor can broad generalization necessarily be derived from the case; the purpose is to locate a case somewhere between the specific and the general.

Through this balance of the specific and generality, the case study illuminates the complexity of real-world examples. As case studies are contemporarily-focused and real world-driven, it is connected to the activities of people (Simons 2009). People’s stories are not just the action of an individual, but are part of an intersection of experiences which make meaning within contexts.

While situating human actions at the centre of a case study, emphasis is placed on interpreting, exploring and understanding why a phenomenon occurs. Thus, a case requires multiple sources of data (Yin 1994). The purpose of multiple sources of data is to complement different approaches and to fill gaps which different methods incur. Yin (2012) argues that there are six common sources of evidence to use in a case study: direct observations, interviews, archival records, documents, participants-observation and physical artefacts. Sources of evidence triangulate and complement each other and
are non-hierarchical in relation to different approaches. A case study is coalesced by what is common and particular about the case (Hyett et al. 2014).

This provides an opportunity to address case-study research from different epistemological and ontological perspectives while still working in tandem with different methods. There is a growing need in research for multi-method studies which engage various analytical approaches (Axinn & Pearce 2006; Creswell et al. 2006; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie 2004). Crossing divides between methods, in particular quantitative and qualitative methods, can give rise to new understanding of social relations (Traag & Franssen 2016).

Feminist research and the case study

Feminist epistemology challenges the way knowledge is constructed from gendered norms and conceptions (Anderson 1995). Feminist research has the primary goal of:

“…demonstrat[ing] the construction and significance of sexual differentiation as a key organizing principle and axis of social power, as well as a crucial part of the constitution of subjectivity, of an individual’s sense of their self-identity as a sexed and gendered person” (McDowell 1999, pp. 8).

Gender, argue Mahler and Pessar (2006), “articulates with other axes of differentiation in complex ways” (pp. 9). These challenges are compounded when discussing women from developing countries and in transnationalism due to the uneven scales of inequalities and exploitation (Herr 2014).

Consequently, feminist methods and gendered analyses must be able to examine power relations, dominance, and forms of resistance. Additionally to using a case as a forum to explore power as it relates to gender, feminist approaches to research must allow for the examination of hierarchal power relations within the research practice itself (Maynard & Purvis 1994). Reflectivity by the researcher is required to examine the power relations created throughout the research process (Caretta 2015; Rose 1997). Case-study research is not inherently feminist, nor does it necessarily lead to feminist practice. It does, however, hold promise for enhancing feminist research practices by advocating multiplicity.

From the outset, case studies can focus explicitly on groups who have been oppressed or had their voices silenced (Wallace 2010). Moreover, because case study is not limited to one form of method or one way of interpreting, there is room within the case study to explore the multifaceted character of social relations. In this way, a case study can amplify groups’ experiences without marking groups or context as homogenous. Case studies can be situated within feminist calls for questioning objectivity and reactions against normative truths (Reinharz 1992; Haraway 1988). Case studies can
contribute towards a situational knowledge where conclusions of the study are not universal, but represent the breadth of experiences within a case.

The feminist emphasis on multiple forms of validity sits comfortably within case studies’ stress on creating validity through different forms of knowledge (Yin 1994). Case-study research, as outlined earlier, advocates for multiple approaches to obtain knowledge and arguably, for feminist research, the focus on triangulation of researchers is a good fit. A feminist researcher positions herself within the production of knowledge and as an interpreter of the results.

Certainly, there are some clashes between feminist approaches and case-study research. Some feminist scholars would argue that methods are gendered (Westmarland 2001). Some methods used can hide or detract from the power relations within gendered practices. More importantly, the presentation of people within the case study can, in itself, be problematic from a feminist viewpoint. Mohanty et al. (1991), for example, asserts that the presence of non-Western narratives alone is not sufficient for disrupting hegemonies and knowledge hierarchies. Additionally, these narratives are important to centre the researcher from the knowledge production and lift the voices of marginalized women (Hale 1991).

Case study does not resolve these problems in doing research with marginalized groups from a feminist perspective. It remains, however, a valuable method for approaching the experiences of women with an eye for capturing multiplicity, power relations, context and gendered practices while at the same time emphasizing the power dynamics inherent in research projects.

The case of Thai women in Sweden

The red line woven through this case study is an examination of how Thai migrant women construct social practices through space and place. The purpose of this case study is to explore the ways that Thai women construct and implement social practices spatially and temporally.

Yin (1994) describes case-study research as moving through a process of travelling from research questions to a set of conclusions. The research presented in this study advances from a broad aim by exploring different elements within a single case; the case of Thai migrant women in Sweden.

A prism as modelled in Figure 6 serves as a metaphor for how this case study works; with an aim and different theoretical outcomes from the case.

This case is not bounded as spatially. Rather, the case is bounded contextually through the experiences of Thai migrant women in Sweden and through their migration stories. To situate the context of the study, specific localities were chosen. The sites presented below describe the localities and context for the study of women’s social practices.
Sweden

Participants came from three different areas in Sweden. Due to ethical considerations (please see Ethics for in-depth discussion), I am unable to disclose these areas by name or location.

The three sites were chosen because they fit into the framework of ‘When the World Goes Rural’, a FORMAS-funded project at Stockholm and Uppsala Universities, which identified rural areas in Sweden that are experiencing growth in international migration. Of the provinces identified for further study, I chose two and moved somewhat freely within them.

**Site 1:** This area is located a significant distance from Stockholm. Anchored by a small urban centre, chief industries include forestry, mining and agriculture.

**Sites 2 and 3:** These rural areas are relatively accessible to Stockholm, and the connections to that urban system shape the character of the daily practices. These areas have high levels of tourism and agriculture.

Thailand

With the exception of two women interviewed – Vanida, who came from the South and Mook, who came from the North – all the women in the study came from the Northeast region of Thailand: Issan. This finding is not surprising, as much of Thailand’s domestic and international migration flow stems from this impoverished region (World Bank 2015; Mills 2012, 1997). Accordingly, it made sense to focus on this region for my field work in Thailand.

**Sites 4 and 5:** Northeast Thailand (Issan) and Bangkok. I spent almost three weeks in Thailand doing fieldwork in Bangkok and Khon Kaen. There, I worked in partnership with a project on Thai berry-pickers, ‘The Grapes of Wrath’, led by Dr. Charlotta Hedberg at Stockholm University and now at
Umeå University. I reveal the site of Issan, in contrast to regions in Sweden, for two reasons: Firstly, the population densities in these regions are such that anonymizing the participants is sufficient to protect their identities. Secondly, the significance of Issan as a sending region was vital to understanding the translocal flows. The sending region in this flow was more important than where women were received in Sweden, which was often predetermined by their partner’s home location rather than by their choosing their destination region over another Swedish region.

Sources of data in the case study

One of the key aspects of case study lies in the application of multiple sources of data, Yin calls it, types of evidence. As outlined above, this includes data methods, data sources, and triangulation of investigators (Yin 1994). The purpose is to create a chain of evidence to explore a complex process. In this case study, I draw on multiple sources of data, and within that various methods, to create this chain. At the centre of the case study, however, sit my narrative interviews. This section outlines the multiple ways that empirical material was gathered in this case study.

This case study uses most of the sources of evidence as outlined by Yin (2012). Evidence includes several main data sources: direct observations, interviews, documents, participant-observation and physical artefacts (see Table 1).

Table 1: Different types of evidence build case studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Case-study Evidence</th>
<th>Examples of data sources in the case of Thai women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>16 narrative interviews, 25 context-building interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documents</td>
<td>Population register data, newspapers, social media, film, academic literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Observation</td>
<td>Events, workplaces, homes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant-observation</td>
<td>Events, workplaces, homes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical artefacts</td>
<td>Food, decoration, photos, mobile phones</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Narrative Interviews

Interviews with Thai women are the primary source of material in this study. I conducted sixteen life-course interviews between 2010 and 2014. Fourteen of the women I met in Sweden, one of the women only in Thailand, and one of the women in both Sweden and Thailand.

Interviews were designed to be as open and flexible as possible in order to allow individual experiences and stories to come to the fore as suggested by Elder et al (2003). Interview questions were not scripted beforehand. I tried to approach each interview as a purposeful conversation about migration.
This was done to glean non-standard information and encourage description and details (Reinharz 1992). Efforts were made to allow the women to tell the story as they wanted and to share information as they felt comfortable. Depending on the length of time we had together and the circumstances of the interview, this resulted in uneven levels of information across the interviews. In other words, there were some women whom I got to know very well over the course of a long visit or multiple visits, while in other cases I met with the women only once for a few hours.

My interview approach was heavily influenced by the life-course model or life-story model (Atkinson 1998). Emerging from the Chicago school, the establishment of the life-course concept is “...one of the most important achievements of social science in the second half of the 20th century” (Colby 1998 pp. vii). Life course as a theoretical and methodological approach emerged out of the context of the 20th century where major events such as the Great Depression, World War Two and the women’s movement, to name a few, drastically changed the trajectory of significant generational cohorts (Elder et al, 2003). Stemming from these, life course or biographical studies began as early as the 1960s and have since evolved to include an array of approaches (Kulu & Milewski 2007). Resurgence in interest of conceptualizing agency in the day-to-day and throughout women’s life course in migration (Ayala & Murga 2016; González Ramos & Torrado 2015) continues to advance the relevancy of this approach.

Life course is based on five primary principles (Elder et al. 2003; Giele & Elder 1998): individual agency, location in time and place, linked lives, timing, and life span. Combined, these five principles fold together individual experiences with social and structural context.

It has been argued that life course is a “set of theoretical guidelines rather than a unified theory” (de Valk et al. 2011, pp. 288) due to the myriad of research methods available to a life-course researcher. Indeed, the terminology can be difficult as terms often overlap or are interpreted differently across disciplines. For the purposes of this study, I understand the life course as a part of the biographic narrative tradition.

While much of the life-course method emerged in a quantitative context (Elder et al., 2003; Mulder & Wagner 1993), mostly through the emergence of longitudinal data, the concept is clearly attractive and useful to qualitative researchers. Methodologically, the life course provides a framework easily adopted by a multitude of perspectives (Kulu & Milewski 2007). The life course has been taken up more readily in other social sciences such as demography, sociology and psychology (Colby 1998) than in geography, despite its inherent stress on place. The appeal of life course to a human geographer lies in the common emphasis on the importance of individual agency in a situated or relational geography. As this study is primarily a qualitative one, I will focus on the strengths and challenges posed by qualitative research methods.
Verd and López (2011) argue the life-course method offers a means to identify degrees of agency – because one can identify how actions or events are the result of things happening to the person or because of their own desire. The significance of this lies in the conceptualization of choice. The decision to migrate is an important exercise in agency and is integral to understanding the role of migration in the life course (Kley 2011). Choice, Verd and López (2011) go on to argue, is context-driven and requires the life-course perspective to situate the individual within broader social structures. Agency is stressed as situated between individual and social structures, following Giddens (1984).

Like Woube (2014), I see migration as a turning point in a person’s life story. This turning point is not necessarily marked by a simple dichotomy of before and after; it is marked by a shift of meaning-making for the individual. Trajectories become disturbed or altered by migration (Verd & López 2011). Interviews, which are primarily retrospective focusing on the past or present, can be well positioned to consider trajectories for the future. This is a necessarily contradictory and messy process. In a following section, I describe the theoretical approaches to methodologies, descriptions of how interviews were conducted, and reflections over the process and my own positionalities.

Stories, narratives, and biographies each have subtle distinctions in practices and across disciplines. I use the terms interchangeably after Ludvig (2006) because the focus of the interview story in this study is to understand the narrations of the self in geographic context, as opposed to biographies or narratives commonly practiced in other disciplines, which draw more on the constitutive constructions of identities (Ludvig 2006). Shared content of gender and migration anchors the collection of stories together. Narratives, importantly, create space for multiple interpretations and presentations of agency which are vital in identifying agency in vulnerable migrant groups (Choi 2014; Jaggar 2009). Together the shared content is united by the ‘reconsideration’ of the researcher and is placed into context (Gluck & Patai 1991).

**Full-population Register Data**

In Papers I and IV, Dr. Karen Haandrikman and I used register data on the whole of the Swedish population to explore the characteristics of Thai women through descriptive statistics. These descriptors include demographic, social-economic and geographic characteristics; and methods included both descriptive statistics and multivariate analysis. Data for this part of the study comes from the PLACE database, a full-population register database managed at Uppsala University in Sweden. Using the database, Thai-born women registered as living in Sweden were isolated for study. We have used register data on women registered in Sweden in 2008, and have included annual
information on their migration, demographic, socioeconomic and geographic attributes in the years 1990-2007. The data enable linkages between the women’s life courses in Sweden and their eventual partners’ lives. Through PLACE, the characteristics of more than 25 000 Thai migrants were examined. (For more details, please see Paper I and Paper IV).

Combining the interview studies with register data, quantitative analysis enriched the methodology by combining big- and small-picture understandings. For example, we found relatively low rates of self-employment among the Thai women migrant cohort, but the interviews suggest other models of ownership. For example, ownership Swedish partners or family members may hide business ownership rates. Likewise, marriage rates were also lower than expected, and interviews clarified that many partners were married in temple ceremonies that were not legally recognized in Sweden; for example Malee, who married her second Swedish husband in a temple ceremony. In this situation, mixed methods reveal how daily social practices can be hidden by different methods (Traag & Franssen 2016). Through our collaboration, we were able to explore the intersections of methods as well as findings. The two methods informed each other with quantitative results shaping interview questions and, conversely, interview results shaping data analysis.

Participation Observations

Participant observations also formed a base to understand the spatial relations of the everyday. Generally speaking, participant observation includes studying what people do, say, are seen doing, and what they do or say with others (Cloke et al. 2004).

I undertook participant observation in houses, workplaces and a Thai temple between 2010 and 2014. This included speaking with and interacting with family members and employers and employees who were not interviewed, but whom I met while interviewing the women. I attended some private social events at Site 1 when I was invited in 2011. The household and workplace experiences were visceral contributions to understanding translocalism in Sweden and Thailand.

I attended and observed Thai public events, primarily in Stockholm, of Thai community organizations. These events ranged in scale from being smaller community-oriented events to larger public events in the city (see Figure 7 and Figure 8). Finally, I did participation observation within online social forums on an ongoing basis to keep abreast of events, issues and other important information within different groups. Accompanying this, I followed several businesses online to understand the narratives projected online. This participant observation stretched and reworked the field sites as part of a global ethnography (Buroway 2000).
The empirical material from my participant observations created a context and understanding to the day-to-day lived experience. There were similar barriers to observation, as with the interviews, including language and access.

Figure 7: Participant Observation at public events - A celebration of Loy Kratong (Author November 2014). Photo was selected to avoid showing faces, for ethical reasons.

Figure 8: Participant Observation at public events - Thailand Festival at Kungsträdgården in Stockholm (Author 2010). Photo was selected to avoid showing faces, for ethical reasons.
Context-building Interviews

Contextual interviews took place in both Sweden and Thailand (see appendix). The purpose of these interviews was to build context in order to situate my life-course interviews. This broad category covers the empirical material gathered to triangulate my narratives and to provide a foundation for my analysis.

These interviews included policymakers, planners, and social service delivery providers involved with the integration of migrants into Swedish society. Additionally, I conducted three interviews with life partners of the women. Two of the men were partnered with the women I interviewed and were keen to participate, themselves, in 2010 and 2012. The third man, interviewed in 2012, was married to a Thai woman who did not want to participate in the study, but he was eager to participate and share his own experiences.

The data generated through these interviews and through supporting documentation such as policy documents underscored the structural context of rural areas in Sweden and Thai migration in both sending and receiving countries, and the structural factors that affect migration flows.

Conducting the narrative interviews

Given the emphasis on narrative interview material in the case study, I present additional material on the process involved in doing narrative interviews. Thai women are the primary focus of this study.

Participants in the study were chosen by being self-identified as a woman from Thailand living in a non-urban part of Sweden. The women selected needed to be adults, and I restricted interviews to women who migrated to Sweden as adults. With the exception of one woman, Sarai, chosen for her leadership in the Thai community and her business experience, all women were interviewed in non-urban areas in Sweden. Additional effort was made to interview women who were engaged in small businesses; however, this was not always possible. Owing to the individual character and circumstances of each interview, overviews are necessarily general.

I contacted women in three ways; cold-calling, through community organizations, and snow-balling. Cold-call contacts were made to Thai-themed businesses, for example a Thai food truck. In these cases, I initiated contact with the owner and, if they fit the criteria of being a Thai woman, I explained the project and asked for an interview (as a side note, many Thai-themed businesses are not Thai-owned). Earlier in the project, I attempted to make such contacts over the phone; however, with time, I learned to identify the possible businesses in an area and make in-person contact. While this was more time-consuming, it resulted in more interviews and trust-building.
There were several contacts that did not result in interviews. Logistics in terms of suitable meeting times and practicalities such as the incredibly long hours that many women work with only a short time off were also factors. Despite these challenges and limitations, the in-depth interview process pursued generated stories and narratives from 16 women who reveal interesting and complicated spatial relations across time and space.

I made contact with two rural Thai Buddhist temple networks and through a Svenska för Invandare (Swedish for immigrants) language centre. Temples play an important role as a hub for many Thai communities (Thai monk, interview). These networks introduced me to some of the women I interviewed and created opportunities for me to meet with other Thai women, who did not participate directly in the study.

At each interview, I asked for suggestions of a friend or family member whom I could also interview. Snow-balling was not an entirely successful approach to finding informants. There was reticence to introducing me to other interviewees generally, often due to uncertainties regarding their migration status or past histories, even if the primary interview went well. Alternatively, in some cases, I would meet with friends or family who were happy to meet with me but would not consent to interviews, for similar reasons. Due to the nature of this relatively small community, some of the women know each other. I was not opposed to women knowing each other and do not see this as particularly problematic; however, it did mean that I needed to be aware of individuals who were acquainted with each other.

It was important to me that the interviews take place in a site that the women were familiar with in order to facilitate open conversations, but also for me to see their lived environment. The majority of the interviews took place in women’s homes or workplaces. For many of the Thai women who were business owners, home, workplaces and social spaces blended together. Where that was not possible, I interviewed them at places the women were familiar with – two women at a rural temple and three women at their local language centre. While these were public spaces, at each location we were afforded privacy and were able to meet in a small room. Moreover, these locations gave me insights into the community and daily lives in broader society (Elwood & Martin 2000).

The locality of the interview is an important part of the interview process, given the research aim to explore the ways in which social practices are embedded spatially and temporally in women’s everyday lives. Interviewing a woman in her workplace and seeing how she created that environment was equally important as the businesses’ location in Sweden. In other words, the business as a site of geographical relations was just as important as the type of region where the site was located. It was important to the project that the interview site be a unit of analysis in and of itself, not just a rural or non-urban setting.
Efforts were made to interview the women individually. With the exception of my interview with Mook, whose preference was to be interviewed together with her husband, I interviewed the women apart from their partners. There were two sets of interviews where I interviewed women together at their request. While individual interviews were the ideal, I found the shared interviews very interesting, as the women often compared and contrasted their experiences between themselves. This even extended to women sharing information and offering each other tips on how to improve communications to Thailand or how to obtain different objects. The benefit of shared interviews was that I was able to see first-hand how information flowed among women. At the same, joint stories and interviews, especially those at household level, are often power-laden and complex (Valentine 1999). This is arguably true in homosocial settings as well, where power relations between women may come into play. Competing interests, power relations, status and past relationships could have changed the information I received. Trade-offs existed in these circumstances; however, the information and stories shared the same theoretical and methodological considerations.

Most interviews were several hours long; the longest interview was an overnight stay and the shortest was two hours (due to time limitations of the business-day cycle). Depth of material was gained through sharing practices and by participating as much as possible in the participants’ daily lives. When possible, interviews included activities other than sitting down in an interview setting. With the exceptions of the interviews at the language centre, every interview involved a meal (Figure 9 and Figure 16). Most often our meetings included a tour of the participant’s house, workplace or even their neighbourhood. Women showed me things they had brought with them or created themselves. They pointed out objects that were important to them. By undertaking these activities, we shared social practices and discussed their role in the women’s lives.

Four of the women I met more than once, and I spoke with others over the phone in follow-up contacts. In some cases, for example, Hansa, I lost contact with the women and was unable to follow up on with their experiences. Follow-up phone calls were not very long and often not in-depth like the initial interviews. Nonetheless, these contacts created the opportunity for updates and to learn more about the women’s situation in Sweden. In many cases shorter updates, given the length of the first interviews, were sufficient particularly for the business updates.

One woman, Raijin, I met both in Sweden and in Thailand. I also interviewed one woman and her husband, in their home in Thailand, where we discussed their life in Sweden. These interviews were central to understanding the spatial elements within everyday practices, which ultimately led me to adopt the translocal approach in my research.
Typically, interviews launched from migration to Sweden as a starting point. Usually, the interviews followed a non-linear approach to the migration story. Generally speaking, time in Thailand was a more sensitive topic than experiences in Sweden, given the more delicate or sensitive Thai life histories such as divorce or children left behind. After trust and familiarity had been built, conversation shifted to experiences in Thailand. Moreover, the women often had questions for me about my migration story and experiences in Thailand. While the role of the researcher’s experiences and whether they should be included or excluded from the interview is debated (see Caretta & Riana 2016), I chose to answer questions as openly and simply as possible. I chose this because I felt it broke down barriers, levelled powered relations, and was more collaborative. By doing so, I did not remain neutral or objective but I did reveal myself throughout the interview process.

Revealing my own migrant stories, connections to Thailand and information about my children was a calculated and deliberate methodological decision (see positionalities discussion for more). These factors were vital for gaining trust and building rapport (Ahlstedt 2015). At the same time, these privileges and conveniences as a researcher require reflection on how these processes shaped the interview situation and the knowledge produced (Lundström 2010).

Interviews were conducted in English and/or Swedish. The women who were participating in the interview determined which language she wanted to speak. More often than not, interviews were a mixture of the two languages together. Having lived in Thailand, I do have some Thai language skills but...
certainly not at the level required to conduct interviews in the language. However, in many instances women did express certain ideas in Thai.

It is, of course, significant that Thai was not the primary language of the interviews. Interviews in Thai would have produced different results (Larkin et al. 2007). Cross-language and cross-cultural interviews present specific situated knowledge’s which require care on the part of the researchers (Caretta 2015). The knowledge that emerges from these situations stems from a configuration of actors, cultures, and languages; thus, the knowledge outcomes inherently reflect these permutations (Temple 1997). Narratives produced in the interviews emerge from the context of the interviewer, the interviewee and the contextual situation.

Bellos (2011), in his work on cross-cultural communication, explored how meaning is created in these types of situations. He argues “two of the key determinants of how an utterance conveys meaning…are these: the situation in which it is uttered … and the identities of the participants, together with the relationship between them” (pp. 72). These complexities were often reflected in the interview setting through language as well as other symbolic practices, such as food. Reflecting upon language in the interview setting highlights the strengths of qualitative methods as well as the weaknesses. Some examples of fluidity in language are:

“….then start work again here again, klockan …3 o’clock” Ploy, May 23, 2010
“We need monk or temple too, so we make Tak baat (merit) or donate for next life, that is what we believe in” Simla, October 14, 2011

Examining the interview encounter aligns with feminist and life-course perspectives which situate the interview as a constructed encounter of knowledge production (Nencel 2014).

Given the need to account for and consider the rooted cultural practices embedded in an interview, life course’s five principles (Elder et al. 2003) attempt to ensure context-gathering while supporting individual agency. Through learning more about the individual and their context, it is possible to move beyond boundaries and to achieve higher degrees of representativeness than other methodologies. Kreen caj, a Thai concept that has no direct translation to English, implies the strong need for everyone involved in a social interaction to be comfortable, both physically and mentally. This can include respecting hierarchies or avoiding conflict or discussing unpleasant things (Deephuengton 1992). This is exemplified by one of my informants, Simla, who, while discussing sexual violence in her shop clarified, “no matter what they say, you just smile” (Interview October 12, 2011). All cultures have specific communication strategies, and Thailand belongs to a high-context culture; meaning that much of what happens is left unsaid (Meyer 2014).
The critique in cross-cultural interviews of not getting the ‘true’ representation of the interview, as an outsider, is a legitimate concern. Erel (2008) tackles this tricky point in multiple and simultaneous narratives. In an interview, a representation of experience is presented. Thus, the purpose of these types of interviews is not necessarily to achieve an ‘objective truth’, but to understand the ways in which individuals make sense of their life experiences given all the complexities (Stroobants 2005). Willemse (2014) meets these critiques by arguing that “biographic narrative’ refers more loosely to narratives reflecting on only parts of a woman’s life, both in the past and in the present”. Accordingly, my approach to the life course or narrative interview is inspired by the theoretical and methodological constructs.

Three languages – English, Swedish and Thai – were more or less present in each interview. This implies that the interviews, in their very character, became a translocal practice as language is an interactional, joint and negotiated performance. Valentine et al. (2008) likens the production of language in certain spheres as a type of social practice. In this regard, the interview process itself can be seen as engaging in a translocal practice where identities, life histories, and flows of migration created a particular language for the production of knowledge. Furthermore, language changed the power dynamics greatly in interviews conducted solely in English, since I, as a native speaker of English, had a very different position than when we spoke Swedish. For interviews, I preferred Swedish where we both were non-native speakers and had to help each other linguistically; this built rapport and trust. However, most interviews blended languages throughout our time together. The mix of language and life experiences points to the complexity of self-identities and relationships between self and cultural homogeneity (Valentine et al. 2008).

Research Process

In line with the process of case-study research, the analytical work of this study revolves around multiple sources of primary and secondary data. Drawing mainly on my interviews and observations, I also wrote interview summaries and field notes of my experiences. When interviews were recorded, these were transcribed manually. Central to the analysis was this collection of field notes and transcripts situated within the context provided by other methods.

Figure 10 outlines the different stages that occurred in analysing this case study. As a short-hand description, Figure 10 is useful for presenting process, analysis and the relationship between empirical materials and the complicated business of producing research. Figure 10, however, runs the risk of presenting the analysis as more linear and procedural than the process it was
in reality. Consequently, the following phases should be interpreted as blurred and integrated rather than as fixed finite research steps.

Figure 10: Flow chart showing research process and data analysis (adapted from Simons 2009)

Phase 1: Preparation and theoretical engagement
The initial phase of the study was to examine the scope of the field and existing information on Thai migration, and to contextualize the case study within academic perspectives.
Phase 2: Into the field and other sources of data

Given the details on field work provided earlier, I will not repeat them here. The emphasis at this stage was to create a complex comprehensive picture of Thai women in Sweden from as many sources as possible to understand the complexities of the experience of migration in Sweden.

Phase 3: Analysing materials

I approached the material in two main thrusts. One was to build context for the case and thus provide an interpretive framework, while the second was to gather material on women’s everyday lives situated within the interpretative framework.

Firstly, the material gathered to provide a framework came from a variety of sources and through my research partnerships. Building a contextual stage is essential to the analytical treatment of interview data. Interview material was treated in different ways. The first level of interpretation was to put together the life story and identify key life events. This was done prior to examining the social practices. This provided a narrative structure and context to the social practices that I would later examine in detail.

Interviews which were recorded were transcribed and analysed into these thematic categories. Field notes were treated in the same way. Empirical material was then connected to the contextual material as a form of triangulation and as a form of data validity. The purpose was to create data sets that were thematic, geographic and also related to the individual’s unique personal story. Data was manually analysed and categorized into assigned themes.

More than a static representation of data gathered, transcription is social practice that reflects theory and indicates a relation to the production of knowledge (Davidson 2009; Ochs 1979). The way women speak is an important component of feminist research. For a researcher, the translation and transcription of transcriptions implies an authority and position of power with regards to dissemination of knowledge (Devault 1990). The act of smoothing and editing speech does have the advantage of securing the hearing of stories which may otherwise not be heard, but more often than not it is done for the benefit of the researcher and the academic community rather than for the benefit of the informants: “Standard practice that smooths out respondents’ talk is one way that women’s words are distorted; it is often a way of discounting and ignoring those parts of women’s experiences that are not easily expressed” (Devault 1990, pp. 107). Thus, transcription and the presentation of the material gathered must be presented in a sensitive manner.

The stories gathered in this research are also found in forms other than the recorded interview. Storytelling and anecdotes play an important role in
formulating this case study and in presenting the case study. The relation between lived experience and narratives is often found in these stories. Anecdotes and stories are key elements of making sense of complications, experiences, and life courses that are not easy to understand and may even elude us (van Manen 1990). Case studies using narratives, stories and other forms of storytelling challenge hierarchies of knowledge and at the same time reveal how the everyday experience is tested and validated (van Manen 1990). The relevance of this to feminist methods is relatively straightforward. The empirical material and the treatment of empirical material during analysis and the presentation of results is fundamentally about embracing and engaging different ways of knowing. It relates directly to the power mechanisms embedded in research and the production of the knowledge.

While it is acknowledged that the primary drivers of the empirical material in this research are the life-course narratives and the register population data, it would have been challenging to interpret their stories without the other empirical sources to contextualize the narratives. The other sources are important in triangulating the interview material.

Phase 4: Constructing a case

Complementing the themes emerging from the literature and empirical material, I then triangulated, identifying unifying or aligning streams of evidence (Yin 2012) with other data sources, for example, the population register data, supporting interviews, participant observations and other secondary material such media, policy reports, and academic literature. The goal, at this stage, was to bring together the different sources of data to compose an understanding of the case study.

Building a context through these mixed sources helped situate the themes and promoted rigour and validity in my interpretations (Baxter & Eyles 1997). Analysing themes and geographies needed contextual support, as much of the social practices occur in migrant women’s private sphere (Matthews 2005). Thus, placing interview material into contexts was an important part of analysis.

Having established themes of interest from the contextual material and having a narrative framework, I began to scrutinize my material to identify and examine the social practices of migrant women. Social practices were categorized around activities such as workplace practices, cooking practices, social activities and family life, among others. Concomitantly, the material was processed to identify key moments through the life cycle, for example marriage, motherhood, travel and retirement. Overlaying the foregoing was an attention to space, place and time. For each of the themes and practices examined, questions were asked: where did this happen and when do these events happen in the life course. Temporal scales were examined, e.g., daily, monthly, yearly or one-time events.
Through these processes, I constructed a case study, which is an edited block of empirical material representing a constructed, analytical body of knowledge (Lund 2014). By pulling themes relating to households, workplaces and community and linking these to place-based actions, the case of Thai migrant women began to emerge as situated knowledge.

Phase 5: Cross checking and validity

At this phase of the research, a case study of Thai women migrants in Sweden had emerged. I then, began the process of cross-checking my material and perspectives against the pre-existing literature (phase 1), triangulating with other researchers in my funding project and my writing partners for the articles. This stage also involved returning to the original data – interview and field notes, transcripts, re-listening to my material – to enrich themes and narrative set. This also had the added strategy of revisiting my own interpretations against the original material.

As outlined in the discussion of life-course methods, flexibility is a key part of the process. This has the added benefit of creating rigor across qualitative interviews (Baxter & Eyles 1997). In cases where participants have flexibility to express their own versions of events, this creates greater coverage of experiences. Oral history traditions have widely accepted that knowledge is reflective (Riley & Harvey 2007) and constituted through individual interpretation. Fischer and Goblirsch (2006) distinguish three levels of analysis for narrative or biographical interviews: the lived life, the presented life, and the experienced life. By understanding, deconstructing and building these levels together, the researcher can place these life stories within situated contexts.

Through cross-checking and engaging with the validity of the multiple sources of data, certain claims to the significance of the case study can be made. Yin (1994) calls these analytical generalizations, which are different from statistical generalizations, where generalized claims based on the theoretical framework of the study can be put forward. These are not truths, but they relate the case and theory together.

Phase 6: Writing as interpretation

Writing is a process and should be understood as part of interpreting a case study; not merely the product of research (van Manen 1990). The process of writing the thesis, in particular, was an act of tying together case studies, revisiting the perspectives, and gathering a red thread to join the research together. Writing a case study evokes the prism metaphor of basing the material in a case with different perspectives to address the research aim and questions.
Papers I-V each represent different types of approaches and theoretical perspectives to the case study. The comprehensive introduction, written in the final stages of the research projects, serves to bring unity to the case study. Writing released different perspectives from the empirical materials.

In summary, the case research process embraced many different data sources and methods to create ways of understanding gender in migration. The research moved from a research project to a case study addressing the scope of research questions (Yin 2012).

Limitations

There are several limitations to this study. The first is the relatively small sample size of life-course interviews. The purpose of the case study is to explore, in depth, different ways to understand social practices of migrant women, and this can be accomplished through the sample size utilized. However, it is worth acknowledging the experiences presented and explored are not universal to all migrant women or to all Thai women living in Sweden. The second key limitation lies in the challenges of doing research across time and space. The social practices explored are part of the larger context of mobility, and so the knowledge produced can serve as a launch point for other studies or comparisons. Finally, the third limitation lies in how the case study started – with Thai women in business. This research unfolds in a different vein than if the case study had started by addressing another topic or issue, such as a women’s shelter. This does not invalidate the study or results, but it does indicate a specific context. Another case study focusing on other aspects of social practices may yield different kinds of findings. These limitations imply that this document is one version of the case study, and other interpretations of the case study would complement the findings presented here and add richer perspectives to the experiences of women migrants.

Ethics

Thai migrant women in Sweden are a vulnerable, stigmatized group (Hedman et al., 2009; Fernbrant et al., 2014; Jungteerapanich, 2014; Webster & Haandrikman, 2016). The women I met throughout the process were highly aware of the stereotypes regarding their life choices and migration stories. As outlined earlier, Thai women face many challenges and unequal power relations in their experiences both in Thailand and through migration. This context and situation has several implications for this study, as study ethics involved more than just following ethics protocols, but also being sensitive
to the complexity of relations during a research encounter (Kobayashi 2001). All the women in the study had the legal right to live and work in Sweden.

All women were informed verbally about the study and the general approach being used in the research. The women were asked to participate in the study and informed that they had the right to refuse to participate, withdraw or stop the interview at any point in the study.

When women consented to be in the study, I also asked whether I could record the interviews. Many women, though happy to participate in the study, did not want to be recorded. They stressed concern over having a recording and that it could be used elsewhere. This concern was especially prominent among women who were in Sweden, but had government decisions pending regarding their residency status as they moved through the immigration stages. This right to refuse recording was something I took very seriously, and as a result I have a limited number of recorded interviews (5). In order to compensate for this, I took interview notes immediately after the interview and wrote summaries that were as detailed as possible. Foremost in the interview encounter was an effort to address the concerns and opinions of the women interviewed.

In some cases, the concerns and opinions of the women’s network also played a role in the ethical framework. In many cases, I met family and friends of the women interviewed and had access to a broader context than was perhaps initially conceived at the start of the interview. As a result, I was able to create a broader context of understanding of the situation than is represented in the formal data I collected.

Participating in interviews made many women and their families initially nervous. Conversely, some women I met were very vocal in their desire to be named. They explained they had nothing to hide and were not ashamed of their stories. Notwithstanding this position, I explained that as a collective each woman must remain anonymous for broader ethical reasons.

Each person participating in the interview was informed about my role in the university and the goals of the project. Certainly my association with Stockholm University may have swayed some women to participate (Kobayashi 1994). However, many women were very aware of discourses around Thai women in Sweden. It was not unusual for me to meet their Swedish husband prior to the interview, or for their husbands to telephone during the interview to check in. For example, when I arrived at one food truck to interview Pranee, her husband was waiting in his car outside. He greeted me and spoke to me about the project before I was able to interview his wife. This exchange was friendly and non-threatening; still, her husband was clearly acting as a gate-keeper. In another instance, during my interview with Malee, her husband telephoned during the interview and asked if she was comfortable speaking with me. Interpreting these experiences is tricky and fraught with contradictory interpretations. I understand fully the nervousness that exists within the Thai migrant community regarding contact with re-
searchers and media. On the other hand, this type of gate-keeping may signal gendered orders of belonging and exclusion. These experiences of speaking or interacting with key actors, such as partners, children or even friends of the women interviewed but who were not part of the formal research process, is an important maker of context. During my experiences meeting women, the boundaries of the traditional interview experiences were continuously blurred (Hall 2009; Kirsch 2005).

Another important ethical consideration in this study is geography. As my funding stipulated that rural areas should be the focus of my study areas, it created a situation where the women could be easily identified. Within the project ‘When the World Goes Rural,’ we agreed collectively that geographic anonymity was crucial to protecting all the informants in the studies.

Certainly this decision, correctly made, creates certain research conundrums. Strikingly, in this project which is deeply concerned with locality, the ethical need for anonymity is admittedly a difficult constraint. Theoretically, this study argues for sensitivity and care for local-to-local relations, yet to protect the participants, this sensitivity is concealed. I believe that the ethical concerns outweigh the theoretical challenges.

Positionalities

While this research is not about me or about my story; it is useful to put forward a ‘mini-life course’, as the story of me is an important part of the production of knowledge and has certainly shaped how I conceive and interact with mobility (Wimark, 2016; Ahlstedt 2015). Personal positionalities are always difficult to write and describe. Like those we interview, which parts and categories equate the sum of me and how have these impacted my research? I will try to present a fair sense of positionalities here, but I am certain that I have left out many important parts of self, prejudices and strengths that all informed this work over the last 6 years.

First and foremost, I am a migrant. I was born a migrant in Malaysia to Canadian and British parents and now, heading into my fourth decade, I remain a migrant. In sum total, I have lived in more than 10 countries and travelled to more than 50; for me, mobility has been a way of life. My nuclear family is spread across three continents – Europe, North America and Asia. Many of the social practices I speak about with women, I also live on a daily basis and so the practices are both familiar yet different. To me, studying rural areas in Sweden was a new experience (Figure 11). My experiences as an immigrant to Sweden were important throughout this study, as were my familial connections to Southeast Asia.

I am a white, middle-class, educated and enormously privileged woman. Differences and inequalities between women must be acknowledged, especially in a case like this, with varying degrees of privileges (Ludvig 2006).
My story, while interwoven with those of my informants, is distinct in many ways and shared in other ways. I became a mother twice during this project, and the importance of this on my own sense of self and the role it played in my research cannot be underestimated. I mention motherhood and being a migrant as important aspects of my position because, in some ways, this shared ‘sameness’ was as significant to the research as the differences between us. Due to my past and family, I had ways into the community, but I am an outsider. This ‘in-betweenness’ allowed me to bridge differences and see different points of view. Notwithstanding, this ambiguity brings forth the importance of reflexivity and positionalities.

*Figure 11: The Swedish countryside – a new landscape to the author (Author field work 2013)*
Born in Southeast Asia, I have always felt a strong connection to the region. I have lived there on and off and travelled there for most of my life. Although I was the daughter of expatriates living in Thailand, it is also a country where I spent large portions of my childhood and it is the country I moved to immediately following my undergraduate university education. I have strong visceral memories of how it feels to be a child in Thailand – the smells, the heat, the rain, the sounds of frogs during the rain and the constant hum of traffic jams. However, that being said, I am not Thai nor am I particularly well-versed in the language. Thailand is both a home for me and a foreign place that is intractably tied to my family and sense of self.

The final aspect of my positionality is that I am a feminist geographer. I see the world as a gendered place where gender and sex are created and shaped across time, space and place. With my position and relation to Thai women and Sweden, I have enjoyed certain flexibilities which have allowed for transgressions of boundaries, while at the same time I have been a part of privileged categories. As a researcher engaging with other people, I can only engage with and acknowledge these gaps through reflexivity (Rose 1997).

I have attempted to approach this project with openness, curiosity and gentleness in order to understand how women make spaces and places in the world. I have tried to reflect on the impacts my western positionalities have had prior, during and after interviews, as well considering the types of knowledge produced (Patai 1991). I recognize that the narratives I was told and the way I have interpreted these narratives, are shaped by my own positions. This project is mediated through my world view, my education and theoretical background.

Meet the women

Since the character of my interviews was personal and conversational, it is important that the reader meet the women, so to speak, in order to contextualize my analysis (Matthews 2005). I will briefly introduce the women with short biographies. As a reminder of my ethical considerations, all names have been changed and I have deliberately omitted geographical references. Although the women interviewed characterize a range of experiences in Sweden, they do not necessarily represent ‘Thai women’.

Whose Voice?

Amplifying women’s voices is deeply tied to methodological and ethical considerations (Pearce et al. 2011; Khan et al., 2007; Spivak 1988). Feminist, alongside post-colonial, methods are deeply concerned with the role of academia and the sharing of women’s stories, as discussed earlier. One way to address these concerns is through positionalities of the researcher explor-
ing and reflecting upon their own roles in the research (Lundström & Windance Twine 2011). The other way to address these concerns is to embrace and support the forms of ‘situated knowledge’ the women possess.

The stories and narratives presented here are some of the multiple perspectives and experiences of Thai women. I do not present a unified or a universal perspective of Thai migration in Sweden (Abu-Lughod 1993; Mohanty et al. 1991; Mohanty 1988). As a case study, multiple voice and perspectives are important to the research scope and method. The stories presented amplify the diversity of experience among Thai migrants.

The women

The women introduced below appear throughout this comprehensive introduction and the five articles included in this compilation. The aliases of the women are consistent (with the exception of Paper I, which uses some vignettes). A summary of the interview characteristics can be found in Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Years in Sweden*</th>
<th>Arrival year*</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Partner</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Employment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amporn</td>
<td>20s</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>1 in Sweden</td>
<td>married</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>maternity leave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beam</td>
<td>30s</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>1 in Sweden; 1 from previous Thai marriage</td>
<td>married</td>
<td>middle</td>
<td>owns and operates her own food business in Sweden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hansa</td>
<td>30s</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>1 in Thailand</td>
<td>separated</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>unemployed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaidee</td>
<td>40s</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>1 in Sweden; 2 step-children in Sweden</td>
<td>married</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>studies and odd jobs in Sweden; runs tourist business in Thailand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaow</td>
<td>40s/50s</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>married</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>unemployed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lalana</td>
<td>30s</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>married</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>works in service sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ma-dee</td>
<td>40s</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>2 in Sweden</td>
<td>married</td>
<td>middle</td>
<td>owns and operates a business in cleaning services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

51
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Years in Sweden*</th>
<th>Arrival year*</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Partner</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Employment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mai</td>
<td>50s</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>2 in Sweden</td>
<td>married</td>
<td>middle</td>
<td>works in a restaurant; small business catering to Thai community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malee</td>
<td>40s</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>2 in Thailand; 2 step-children in Sweden</td>
<td>second marriage in Sweden</td>
<td>middle</td>
<td>owns and operates massage business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mook</td>
<td>50s</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>2 from Thai marriage; step-children in Sweden</td>
<td>second marriage in Sweden</td>
<td>middle</td>
<td>owns and operates massage business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ploy</td>
<td>40s</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>2 in Thailand; 1 in Sweden</td>
<td>married</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>operates service business with her husband who is owner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raijin</td>
<td>20s</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>1 in Sweden</td>
<td>married</td>
<td>middle</td>
<td>Trainee; opened tourist business in Sweden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarai</td>
<td>50s</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>1 in Sweden</td>
<td>second marriage in Sweden</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>Owns and operates her own tourist business in Sweden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simla</td>
<td>40s</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>1 in Sweden; 1 in Thailand</td>
<td>married</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>owns and operates multiple massage businesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunisa</td>
<td>40s</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>1 in Sweden</td>
<td>married</td>
<td>middle</td>
<td>owns and operates her own food business in Sweden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanida</td>
<td>40s</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>1 in Sweden; 1 adopted from Thailand</td>
<td>married</td>
<td>middle</td>
<td>owns and operates tourist business</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*approximate at time of first interview (some women counted from when they first holidayed in Sweden or moved to Sweden)
Jaidee
Jaidee is in her early 40s and has one young daughter under the age of five. She also has an older stepchild from her husband’s prior marriage. She has lived in Sweden for four years, and moved to a rural area to be with her Swedish husband after she became pregnant. Prior to her pregnancy, Jaidee maintained a long distance relationship. Jaidee has a high level of education and is the owner of a successful tourist business in Southern Thailand. She continues to manage this business despite living in Sweden. She is very close to her Swedish family, and she likes to ice-fish and to pick mushrooms and berries with them. She continues to travel to Thailand every winter to be with her family there and to manage her business during the high tourist season. She and her husband may return to Thailand later in life depending on their youngest child’s needs, but she believes Sweden is a better place to raise her child.

Mai
Mai has lived in Sweden for almost 15 years and has two children. She is in her early 50s. She moved to Sweden to be with her Swedish boyfriend, whom she dated for two years before deciding to move to Sweden. She came to Sweden with her first child from a previous marriage, who was 13 at the time, and who is now married to a Swedish man and expecting Mai’s first grandchild. Shortly after arriving, she had a second child who has grown up in Sweden. At first, the family lived in a small regional city, but when her son was two or three years old they moved to a rural area. Mai is currently working as a cook in her friend’s business and has tried running her own business but couldn’t maintain a client base. She continues to engage in small entrepreneurial projects in her home. Mai has found learning Swedish difficult.

Sunisa
Sunisa runs a small take-away along the side of a busy rural highway, and she has been doing this for 11 years, although she has been in Sweden for almost 15 years. Sunisa opened her business to support herself and her daughter, while her husband maintains the costs of the house. Her daughter is 8 years old. After dating and spending many years with her husband in Southeast Asia, she decided to move to Sweden because she believed she could make a life there. Her hours at her business are long, but she is happy to save money which she says is easier to do in a rural area since there is nowhere to spend her money. She feels that there are ‘too many trees and not enough sun’ in the Swedish countryside. She would like to return to Thailand when her boyfriend retires, but she is not sure if that will happen. She
has sufficient Swedish language to run her business. Due to her long working hours, she does not socialize often with friends.

Ma-dee
Ma-dee has been in Sweden for 19 years and she has two teenage sons. Ma-dee came to Sweden through an arranged marriage; her sister was already here and was lonely, so Ma-dee decided to move to Sweden to join her. She is not highly educated and is working as a cleaner in a business. Ma-dee speaks fluent Swedish. Ma-dee likes living in Sweden, though it has not been an easy process for her; in her early years following migration she returned often to Thailand. However, now that her children are older, her trips are much more infrequent.

Kaow
Like Ma-dee, Kaow has been in Sweden for a long time, more than 20 years, but unlike many of the other women in this study, she has not settled into ‘feeling well’ in Sweden. Kaow talked about missing food and feeling uneasy in body since moving to Sweden, and takes many medications for her poor health. She is married to a Swedish man but desperately wants to return to her home region of Issan. Kaow has worked a variety of jobs in the last 20 years, mostly in restaurants, but is trying to get a job as a cleaner. She is poorly educated and has very few remaining ties to Thailand.

Ploy
Ploy has lived in Sweden for nine years and is married to a Swedish man whom she met while he was on holiday in Thailand. Ploy is in her late 30s, was previously married to a Thai man, and is the first wife of her current husband. She has two children from her first marriage, who were quite young when they followed her to Sweden, and now has a young child. Ploy is highly educated and has an advanced degree from a university. She and her husband manage a family business and, overall, she is quite content with her life. She has an extended social network through her family and her children’s school activities. Her biggest identified complaint is being poor in Swedish language. Ploy returns to Thailand annually and plans to retire there with her husband. She has daily contact with her mother and feels that it is her responsibility to care for her despite the long distances.

Sarai
Sarai is in her late 40s and has lived in Sweden for 25 years. She came to Sweden to marry a Swedish man and remained married to him for several
years. Finding herself alone and separated from her Thai family and knowing very few other Thai women in 1980s Sweden, Sarai was motivated to learn Swedish perfectly. Her refusal to be a ‘Thai housewife’ and her decision to instead open businesses in Sweden ultimately led to her first marriage dissolving, she says. After her divorce, Sarai chose to remain in Sweden instead of returning to Thailand, and after some time she remarried. Her second husband is a man from another Asian country; they have one son. Sarai and her husband do not have plans to return to Thailand and are focused on helping their son succeed in Sweden. Her business continues to grow. With new communication technologies, Sarai has been able to extend and improve her businesses, which are deeply connected to Thailand, a factor which allows her to reengage with her family.

Mook
Mook moved to Sweden 12 years ago to be with her first Swedish husband, whom she met while he was on holiday in Thailand. Mook did not want to move to Sweden with her first husband. She told me she moved to Sweden because her mother told her it was her only option to improve her chances for herself and her two children. Due to the power of her mother’s advice, she immigrated against her better judgment to Sweden where she has been, until recently, very unhappy. Mook studied Swedish diligently and eventually left her first Swedish husband and opened her own massage business. She has since met and become engaged to another Swedish man. Her children have joined her in Sweden and they are now adults, living in a Swedish city by themselves. Mook and her husband own a house in Issan, Thailand and regularly return there to spend the winter season.

Amporn
Compared to many of the other women, Amporn has not lived in Sweden very long; less than five years. Amporn currently works, but she is also attending Svenska för Invandare (SFI) to learn Swedish. Amporn met her Swedish partner while working at her cousin’s restaurant in a tourist area in the south of Thailand. Her cousin had married an English man, and Amporn moved to the South to meet a Western partner through her work. She has some education. She dated her Swedish partner for one and a half years before she became pregnant and moved to Sweden; they have one child together. She has not returned to Thailand since moving and, as a couple, they have no plans to return. Once she has completed SFI, she will look for work and, perhaps, have more children.
Hansa
Like Amporn, Hansa is also in SFI and studying Swedish so she can find employment. Hansa has been in Sweden for three years, and it has been very difficult for her. In Thailand, she had a low-paying job and she was divorced. Since moving to Sweden, Hansa has learned she is the fourth Thai wife her husband has moved to Sweden. Her husband is an alcoholic and abusive, and she has recently left him. Hansa is desperate to learn Swedish and find work so she can return to Thailand and to her 12-year-old daughter, who is still in Thailand. Hansa relies on her friends to provide housing for her during this difficult period.

Lalana
Lalana enjoys living in Sweden, and recently moved to the countryside and is happier there than in the city. She has lived in Sweden with her Swedish husband for eight years, and she does not have any children. In Thailand, she had a good office job and she had not been married before. In Sweden, she works as a cleaner but chooses to work with a different immigrant group so that she can improve her English; at home she speaks Swedish with her husband. Lalana and her husband return regularly to Thailand, and she maintains close ties to her family and friends there.

Raijin
Raijin is in her late 20s and she has lived in Sweden for approximately 5 years. Raijin has a young son with her Swedish husband; it is her first marriage. Her husband had been married previously, and he met Raijin when she came to Sweden to visit a cousin who is married to his friend. Raijin has a college degree and she is very ambitious. Her top priority after arriving in Sweden was to quickly find work in Sweden so she could begin supporting her parents. Since arriving, she has purchased her parents a house in a city near their village and supports several family members in their village. She has undergone employment retraining in Sweden and is now working in her chosen field. When her husband is ready to retire, they plan to return to Thailand where she will open a business using these skills. She has already thought about how she will manage the business in Thailand after his retirement. She maintains strong ties with Thailand, and her family has been to visit her in Sweden.

Simla
Simla has a degree in business management which she uses to manage a successful business in rural Sweden. Simla is in her early 40s and has two
children: one daughter from her current marriage and a teenage son from her previous marriage in Thailand. Simla has lived in Sweden for nine years and she has been with her Swedish husband for a long time; they previously lived and managed a business together in Thailand for many years. Her husband now runs his own business in Thailand as well as in Sweden. Simla does not like to speak Swedish, focusing primarily on English and Thai. Nevertheless, as her children get older she feels she must speak more Swedish with them. She returns regularly to Thailand to take care of her family and gather supplies for her business.

Malee

Malee is the oldest of eight siblings and the daughter of farmers in Northeast Thailand. Her mother ran a market stall there. Malee left school quite early in order to support her family. She became a professional folk singer in the Issan style and travelled throughout Thailand, Japan and Singapore. After her first marriage, which produced two sons, she returned to school for vocational training, studying massage and aesthetics. Eventually, she opened businesses in the South of Thailand, and it was there she met her first Swedish husband. Sadly, after four happy years together in Sweden, he passed away. Recently she married another Swedish man whom she met in her local village. Her sons continue to manage her tourist businesses in Thailand. Malee would like to return to Thailand when her husband retires.

Beam

Beam is in her early 30s. She owns and manages her own food truck which she purchased after saving money for quite some time; the business opened on her birthday. Beam is from a small rural area in Northeast Thailand. Her parents owned and operated small vending businesses. Her father sold ice cream and her mother had a market stall. Beam left the Northeast to move to Bangkok prior to moving to Sweden. She has two sons, one from a previous marriage in Thailand and the second with her Swedish partner. Beam prides herself on the quality of her food and the fact that she makes ‘real’ Thai food.

Vanida

Vanida came to Sweden in her early 20s in 1993. Vanida is the youngest daughter. Her parents are farmers, and now her oldest sister has taken over the farm. Vanida’s marriage was arranged through a relative; following their advice, she migrated to Sweden after a 3-month chaperoned visit. Vanida and her husband have two children; one daughter and an adopted son from Thailand. Now Vanida owns and operates growing and successful businesses.
specializing in high-end food and Swedish baked goods. Her work is seasonal, and in the off-months she works in her husband’s business. She plans to retire to Thailand with her husband later in life, and to do this they recently bought land in the South near her family.
Thesis Structure and Paper Description

Building from the case study of Thai migrant women, this thesis consists of a comprehensive introduction (kappa) and five papers. The comprehensive introduction situates the thesis, laying out the context and theoretical backdrops. It also provides a broader discussion of results from a conceptual perspective.

Following the comprehensive introduction, five articles are included and are listed, and referred to numerically according to their order throughout the text. The papers present the various practices by women, located within different social fields and sites, which contribute to the ongoing discussion of translocal flows and connections across time, space and places. The papers should be seen as a prism of different perspectives within a case-study approach. Together the papers provide theoretically different ways to explore the multiplicity of social practices in space and time constructed and implemented by Thai migrant women. To address this multiplicity, I examine social practices in different places and context but through the prism of my case study (Figure 12). As a unified whole, the purpose of these papers is advance my thesis aim which is to explore the ways in Thai migrant women construct and implement social practices spatially and temporally.

Research Aim
To explore the ways in which Thai migrant women construct and implement social practices spatially and temporally.

Figure 12: The case study as a prism illuminates a variety of approaches to understanding social practices.
Paper I: Thai Women in Sweden: Victims or Participants?

Webster, Natasha and Karen Haandrikman (2016) Thai women in Sweden: Victims or participants? Social Sciences Asia 2(1), 13 – 29
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Paper I considers questions of power and agency. Through this paper, agency and power are seen as a central component of the social practice of migration. Migration creates new scenarios and context for migrants, and in this flexibility lay multiple forms of social practices which are sometimes contradictory.

This paper emerges from the context of increasingly high rates of migration to Sweden from Thailand. It examines this highly gendered migration flow from an agency and power perspective. There exist many stereotypes and preconceptions regarding Thai migrants that have not been critically explored. Using mixed methods, we examine the characteristics of the group and explore the implications for how agency can be understood within the context of mobility. The paper addresses questions raised in feminist approaches to migration regarding how agency can be understood. The paper concludes agency is embedded in social practices and shifts across time, space and place.

This paper draws on register data and interviews presented in the form of vignettes. Shaped by the story of migration, we tackle how unequal power relations are formed by and through social practices. In the paper, we show that there are many inequalities and gendered systems of oppression that are part of this gendered migration flow; yet we demonstrate the ways that perspectives shift and change over time. Geography and time emerge as central to the production of social practices. Migration offers an opportunity to renegotiate or re-construct gendered social practices. In this paper, social practices are shown as flexible and a means to negotiate and resist within different power structures. Moreover, the case of Thai women shows the need for more studies on social practices of vulnerable women.

This paper primarily addresses research questions 1 and 2. The first, in what way does gender shape migrant social practices and how are these social practices shaped by migrant micro-geographies, shows that doing gender is at the heart of their agency and power. The ways that women respond to their contexts and situates is contextual. This paper teases out the challenges in exploring how practices are created through the life course.
Paper II: ‘Women in groups can help each other and learn from each other’: The role of homosocial practices within women’s social networks in building local gender contracts


Paper II joins the discussion of local gender contracts and theoretically engages with ways of constructing gender relations by drawing on empirical data from two research sites: East Africa and Sweden. Local gender contracts are a way to understand the ways in which gender is situated and practiced by groups within a local context. Using this framework, we examine how homosocial women’s activities are constructed as practices to achieve their goals.

The central contribution of this paper to my thesis work is to examine the ways in which homosocial networks, groups of women, build and create different types of gendered social practices as seen through local gender contract. Implicit in the local gender contract is the idea that locality shapes individual agency and in turn, groups through local structures. At the same time, by drawing on such contrasting sites, we meet the overarching aims of a case study through triangulating data sources, investigators and methods. This gives a broader range to examine how building social practices is a gendered activity despite differing local contexts. This paper draws on our respective field notes, interview data and participant observations. The paper finds that women resist, negotiate, manoeuvre and are flexible in gender contracts despite limited agency.

This paper highlights the importance of social practices in group settings. In the examples, we see how women collectively build and construct practices to improve their day-to-day experiences. It highlights that social practices are produced by agentic women and are forms of negotiation and resistance. This paper addresses research questions 1 and 2 by showing the ways in which social practices are related to life as a migrant and how social practices are tied to specific contexts and localities. Through the creation of local gender contracts, social practices are forged contextually in a locality and through the migration experience. In this paper, ‘doing gender’, although not explicitly coined that way, is tied to local constructions of gendered social practice. Thus gender, geography and migration traverse the creation of social practices.
Paper III: Spicy Meatballs and Mango Sylt: Exploring translocal food practices in rural Sweden

Webster, Natasha and Forsberg, Gunnel
Draft Manuscript

Paper III adds to debates around rural food policies and extends these to broader questions of social practices in migration. It adds to the growing body of literature investigating the importance of everyday practices of food preparation to households and communities. By examining migrant food practices in rural Sweden, we ask how food serves as a connection across space and time and how food joins shared knowledges and experiences. Food as a social practice could offer potential gateways for integration.

The food-related practices created in projects and by migrant communities are analysed through the lens of a translocal understanding. The examples of Thai food migrant practice highlight the importance of daily well-being as part of the integration process. Daily practices are mundane but vitally important. This paper shows that translocal social spaces create shared social practices. The act of co-constructing social practices between newcomers and established populations offers an opportunity for increased understanding and shared place-making.

This paper addresses question 2, as it shows how translocal social spaces create shared social practices. These social practices are built by women and are gendered in character. The act of co-constructing social practices between newcomers and established populations offers an opportunity for increased understanding and shared place-making. This suggests that a translocal understanding of social practices could be implemented into integration programs; and thus provides insights to policymakers.

By exploring how social practices are placed-based, this paper also attends to question 3. In this paper, the projects and strategies to promote integration are place-specific and emerge from a spatial context. This illustrates the linkages between social practices, migrant experiences and the context of those interactions.

Webster, Natasha and Haandrikman, Karen
Submitted to Women Studies International Forum

Paper IV embarks on the discussion of feminist entrepreneurship and how social practices are part of migrant business practices. This paper examines the situation of Thai small businesses in Sweden. While there is much anecdotal discussion over the nature of these businesses, little research delves deeply into their practices. Drawing on mixed methods, this paper provides an oversight of Thai migrant businesses and connects to the migrant experiences in an entrepreneurial context.

We argue throughout the paper that understanding businesses practices beyond an economic construction is useful for understanding how work sites, as a type of micro-geography, are linked to migration experiences. We show how women who become entrepreneurs are situated within specific contexts shaped by migration histories. The research explores and positions migration stories as central to understanding how and why some social practices are socially constructed in the workplace. Constructed social practices relate to translocalism by linking individual migrations micro-geographies with their gender and daily practices.

This paper tackles questions 1 and 2 by exploring how work is a social practice embedded in individual migrant micro-geographies. The paper reveals the social practices shaping small Thai businesses are gendered. The character of services migrant women undertake are gendered industries, and these social practices shaping their day-to-day lives are embedded in gendered structures. Building on that, the businesses show that individual migrant micro-geographies are important sites of social practices that are deeply linked to migration stories and to being a migrant woman. The paper adds a workplace and social practice perspective to the broader discussions on migrant small businesses.
Paper V: Rural-to-Rural Translocal Practices: Thai Women entrepreneurs in Sweden

Webster, Natasha
Submitted to Journal of Rural Studies

Paper V engages with the role of the rural in business social practices. This paper draws on interview material from both Sweden and Thailand, and examines the ways in which the geographies are linked by the connections forged through women’s social practices. The Thai businesses examined include food trucks and massage shops in rural areas in Sweden. The paper shows that translocal businesses are gendered in practice, through the sectors in which they are situated, their networks, and in the ways that businesses are practiced in the day-to-day.

This paper focuses on the geographic relations created in a micro-geography; the work place. The workplace functions as a node and vector of translocal connections. The connections created by Thai migrant women businesses link small businesses to different localities across distance and time, for example to nearby urban centres and to regions in Thailand. The paper highlights the importance of examining rural-to-rural relations and the global exchanges occurring in these regions which bypass national and urban hierarchies.

This paper addresses questions 1, 2 and 3 by demonstrating that geography is an integral part of the construction of social practices. It also shows migrant individual micro-geographies are a key site of broader geographical processes. Thai migrant women are shown as key global actors connecting and linking regions through small-scale sites where gendered practices and gendered networks are part of globalization. The significance of this lies in the interlinkages associated with the role of an individual as a mediator of larger social processes. It also suggests ways in which migration composes relational spaces and places.
Conceptual Findings

Saskia Sassen (2004) made the case that women are the enablers and drivers of globalization, yet they remain on the periphery of the theorizing of globalization and are seen as insignificant actors. Women’s perceived lack of worth contributes to the masking of their activities through scale and over emphasis on the role of the state (Walsh et al. 2013; Devasahayam et al 2004). Pratt and Yeoh’s (2003) critique of transnational academic studies emphasizes the assumed masculine situatedness and the lack of particularity of experiences. These foundational critiques have steered feminist geographers to place weight on the individual and multiple forms of oppressions (Herr 2014; Bastia 2014; Green 2012). Women’s geographical positioning, theoretically, in feminist debates, i.e. local/national, remains under-theorized (Herr 2014; Merali 2008), and this is a challenge to understanding women’s agency in multiple contexts such as those created in migration. The particularity of women’s migrant experience connects well with a translocal perspective, with its built-in basis for tackling simultaneous multiplicities. Pina-Guerassimoff (2010) shows translocal perspectives at the macro-, meso-, and micro-levels give different, and sometimes contradictory, perspectives on Chinese women’s migration patterns who, like Thai women, can simultaneously be victims of international migration and be active agents of their own experiences. These tensions within transnational feminisms lead to questions about understanding migrant women’s experiences in different settings, contexts and times.

Inherent to understanding translocalism is the notion of multiple migrant subjectivities; something many gender scholars struggle to theorize across spatial contexts (Maitra 2013; Thayer 2000; Johnson-Odim 1991). The translocal perspective accounts for individual agency within a transnational sphere (Freitag & Von Oppen 2010) and so can realize the particularities and contradictions of individual experience within complex structures. A translocal perspective does more than ‘just making women visible’ because the concept centres on the multiple subjectivities that an individual can carry or construct through time and space. Thus femininities-masculinities, urban-rural, or sending-receiving regions, among others, remain complex relations and can be incorporated into the individual’s translocal context. By challenging dualisms, through geographies and through agents, the intersection of individual lives with spatio-temporal outcomes adds a new element to understanding women’s roles in different places and times. Moreover, women are
situated within a web of relations (Siim & Assmuth 2016; Holdsworth 2013), thus they can be understood as active actors even within strong or limiting structures (Hoang 2011; Sandy 2007).

**Figure 13: Migrant women are situated within coexisting contexts**

Paper I focuses broadly on the story of migration and depicts a generalized view of experiences of Thai migrant women in Sweden. Given that social practices are situated, it is important to broaden the context of where migrants are positioned temporally and spatially. Figure 13 provides a simple depiction of the contexts in which the 16 women migrated to Sweden. While it is not meant to be a comprehensive history of the countries, the junctions selected represent key points of large social and economic events that would have affected daily life or shaped their migration process. The women, positioned between the two countries, developed practices which are situated in the contemporary context of their life experiences. Through Figure 13, migrants can be understood as both situated in context but also as agents facilitating translocal processes with the resources available at that specific time and place. Migrant social practices, in translocalism, should be situated within a context which acknowledges structural settings but emphasizes individual experience. Having the individual as the sole focus of study does have pitfalls; Squires (2008) argues that centring the person could focus discussion on individual characteristics rather than on structural commonalities. To remedy this, context, structures and individual need to be combined. As
translocal actors, context shapes individual social practices (Brickell and Datta 2011).

The range and span of translocal connections in a migrant’s life reveals the importance of different spaces and places to the construction of social practices. Figure 14 provides a conceptual snapshot of translocal relations in Malee’s life course. Figure 14, indicates the multiple ways that spaces and places intersect with life events; this demonstrates the links between life course and migration. The identified translocal relations show migration is an ongoing process punctuated with key movements and also embedded in relation to other points in one’s life. The arrows within the figure point to translocal relations accrued throughout the life course. Examining the life course as narrative demonstrates the spaces and places are integral to the construction and implementation of an individual’s social practices. Social practices, while rooted in the ongoing and the effects of migration, continue throughout life stages.

Malee’s story (Figure 14) shows she maintains ties to her home region, Northeast Thailand, throughout her life course. Her story illustrates how other spatial ties, for example, to South Thailand are also maintained despite further ongoing migration. This suggests translocalism is made through multiple spatial strategies and can be found through different stages or steps in migration. Translocalism is an ongoing set of social relations created in the day-to-day and throughout the life course. Translocal relations are constructed through social practices and connected translocally by geographic relations.

With the arrival of new, inexpensive and easy-to-use communication and transportation technologies, women are able to adopt new spatial strategies resulting in differing translocal social practices. In Paper V, the role of new and old technologies is linked to the rural-to-rural connections. The life-course narrative provides insights into how social practices can change over time. Sarai, one of the earlier migrants to Sweden, has been able to extend and improve her businesses over time due to the internet. Prior to smartphones, Sarai employed very different social practices to maintain connections between Sweden and Thailand. Sarai also described how her new husband did not understand why she had to call her parents, and since he did not want to pay for the calls and unable to shirk familial responsibilities, she had to have a job. Now, in the age of the internet and mobile phones, Sarai is able to phone home every day, if not multiple times a day, at minimal cost. Sarai’s mother recently passed away, but Sarai continues her daily contact with Thailand through her business. Hansa, who recently separated from her husband, has lost almost all contact with Thailand because leaving him meant losing regular access to the internet. She has a mobile phone and can call Thailand in emergencies, but calling on a regular basis is too expensive. In her case, the end of her marriage also meant severing her ability to regularly contact Thailand. These examples show how communication technolo-
gy is significant to these women, and it emphasizes that changing technologies are key to ongoing changes in translocal social practices. Through technological changes, Sarai had connected economically to Thailand and reengaged with her family.

Figure 14: The life course of Malee: Women migrants create social practices across time-space.

Raijin uses mobile phones to contact her family at least a few times a week. She also purchased and maintains the costs of some of her family’s mobile phones in Thailand, thus paying communication costs in both countries. Ironically, for Raijin, moving overseas increased her responsibilities in Thailand, and she uses the phone to provide familial support and guidance. Amporn uses mobile phones to make weekly phone calls to her parents. Likewise, Ploy purchased her mother a computer and hired someone to set up all the programs and tools necessary for them to maintain regular internet
contact. Ploy keeps her Swedish computer in her kitchen and speaks to her mother most nights while preparing the meals. These tools tighten the sense of proximity between the women and their families in Thailand. Women connect events to spaces through sending pictures of daily and special events (Figure 15). This also illustrates how daily practices are spatial and temporal in the everyday. Ploy says, “I talk with my mother every day. She tell me, ‘Today, Nun, our…our neighbour, go buy fish’ blah blah [laughs]. Everything, everything she tells me”. Ma-dee, Kaew, and Sarai who arrived in Sweden more than 19 years ago, and so had little opportunity in their early years for regular contact, described loneliness and isolation combined with guilt as being very challenging. Sarai remembers making a phone call for 2-3 minutes every few months. These calls were something she saved money for, and she proudly found employment so she would be able to call her parents. Family ties and obligations underpinned the urgency and frequency of these social practices. Almost without exception, the women discussed the need to provide care and emotional support, a gendered social practice in migration, and thus the incentive to build such strongly rooted social practices of connection on such time scales.

Time also shapes daily practice: Ploy, since she runs her own business, starts work later in the morning so that she can be available online late in the afternoon, Thai time. Sarai, who runs her own business which connects Thailand and Sweden daily, begins her Swedish work day around 4 am in order to be available for most of the Thai business day. Sunisa, who runs her own takeaway truck, said that she often times her work breaks in order to call Thailand, thus regulating her day according to Thai time. One woman mentioned, offhandedly, that evening SFI classes were ideal as she could then be connected with Thailand in the mornings, when it was night in Thailand. As a result, clock time in Thailand shapes and coordinates daily lived rhythms in Sweden, fusing together space, place and time into a translocal social practice. As seen in Paper IV, workplaces, and even homes, carefully use objects to display social practices. The objects are representations of the translocal connections and are aligned with women’s experiences (Figure 16).

Translocalism does not offer a complete solution to conceptualizing gender across time-space throughout the life course, but it does offer a vocabulary and perspective which takes questions further. It does create a theoretical space for lifting the experiences of women within and in relation to global spatial and masculine hierarchies that is appealing.
Figure 15: Smartphones and other technologies facilitate and stretch translocal connections (Author, 2014). Photo is altered to avoid showing faces for ethical reasons.

Figure 16: Workplaces as a site of translocal social practices. This Thai shop window displays symbols from both Sweden and Thailand. (Author 2015).

These examples demonstrate how daily life is deeply connected to social practices which are produced in situated contexts. Gender shapes the construction of social practices and, in turn, so does the translocal character of the women’s situations. These activities demonstrate how individuals construct social practices through their choices and actions while embedded in specific spatial and temporal contexts (Shove et al. 2012). Each of the social practices described are derived from a specific spatial context. This suggests
the real-world experience of migration remains spatialized throughout women’s daily lives. Being embodied as women shapes and constructs the nature of social practices which are embedded in time and space.

What is interesting in examining gendered social practices from a translocal perspective is that social practices emerge contextually. Translocal context is derived from multiple sites and times. This implies translocal social practices are constructed from a wide range of social practices and are built to facilitate strategies which meet the daily needs of women. The role of technology, not just found in smartphones but also post, commercial travel, telephones, and other material objects, creates tools through which women can functionalize translocalism to meet their needs across spaces and times.

The common emerging theme of this thesis and throughout the papers is that the translocal social practices explored in this case study are contingent on specific strategies. Thai women are gendered agents of these social practices and are utilizing specific resources, objects and networks to bridge the distances found in their daily lives. Whether the women are in their home, workplace or working together on a community project, the translocal quality of social practices suggests space and places are becoming more and more entwined. Thai women, in this study, emerge as significant drivers of day-to-day global countrysides and do the functional work of bringing spaces and places in globalization together daily and through their life course.
Concluding Discussion

In this thesis, I shed light on the role of gender and social practices as constructed and implemented spatially and temporally by migration. I have shown the ways in which social practices in homes, workplaces and communities are shaped by a migrant’s own geographies. This thesis contributes to a deeper understanding of Thai social practices in Sweden. Through this work, rural-to-rural flows, an under examined migration network in the literature, have been explored. By exploring gender and social practices, the day-to-day gendered activities of women show much of the work of migration and translocal flows are found in small mundane prosaic activities and so forms the base of the lived migrant experience. This thesis demonstrates that women’s activities constitute and frame migration as a relational process. This enables us to understand how Thai migrant women, as agents shape global processes across geographies, and the ways in which their practices are part of larger social processes changing rural areas. By examining these practices, I bring forward the importance of understanding how women’s migration shapes translocal practices. Returning to the research questions of this thesis, I will address each question in turn.

Question 1: In what ways does gender shape migrant social practices?

This question draws attention to the role gender plays in the daily experience of migration. Gender shapes and is shaped by social practices. Social practice in migration is co-constituted by multiple constructions of gender. That is, Thai migrant women produce and construct social practices within Thai and Swedish gender norms and through negotiation between these. This not to suggest singular cultural presentations of gender, rather to suggest through mobility, gender is further complicated and relates to multiple spaces and places. As Thai migrant women construct social practices in their day-to-day, the contexts of their migration stories shape the activities and strategies they employ. Women, as gendered agents, shape social practices to facilitate their lives. In the context of migration, social practices may become translocal.
The life-course method highlights the ways in which gender is central to one’s life story and creates a context for decision-making and enacting migration. The examination of gender from this perspective suggests gender is produced and practiced through routine actions on various temporal and spatial scales. Temporal and spatial scales can shift the lens through which we understand social practices; for example, transnational marriage is not simply a means to exit a rural area, but can offer an opportunity to return later in life, albeit within a new nexus of gendered relations. Thus we see gender is central to the production of migrant social practices and that gender informs the process of constructing and implementing social practices.

Question 2: How are social practices constructed within individual migrant micro-geographies?

This question highlights the importance of spaces and places, or individual migrant geographies, in constructing social practices. Social practices stem from specific contexts which are spatial and temporal. This study demonstrates the spaces and places of individual migrant geographies are not bounded entities. Home, workplaces and even community events are sites of mingling, melding and conjoining geographies. Migrant micro-geographies are negotiated and resisted through some social practices and, in other social practices, are adopted and merged. In other words, through individual migrant geographies, social practices are ways to explore how different spatial and temporal strategies are constructed and implemented as a daily lived experience. Through this work, the role of different individual micro-geographies is brought forward as key sites of global flows and connections.

Individual migrant micro-geographies are the medium for everyday social practices. Thus, these sites become the functional platform for social practices and the forum for both the routine and change. As sites both generate and enforce social practices, individual migrant micro-geographies can be inherently contradictory. Indeed, the papers making up this thesis share a common element of struggle or contradiction between migration creating new kinds of social practices and enforcing other kinds of existing social practices. Nonetheless, what emerges is that migrant women are agents in the construction of social practices in the spatial and temporal spheres of their lives.
Question 3: By what means are migrant social practices contextualized by spaces and places?

In addressing this question, I have shown how migration is a spatial process embedded in individual migrant geographies and in a broader geographic context.

As previously discussed, the role of individual micro-geographies contextualizes and shapes spaces and places. In this question, however, I am interested in the larger geographic implications that emerge from a study of social practices in migration.

The case study shows Thai women in Sweden are most often from rural areas in Thailand and are more likely to settle in rural areas in Sweden, revealing an under-explored migration flow; rural-to-rural. Rural-to-rural connections are made by individuals and families in the home, the community and the workplace. This niche, certainly present in the Swedish case, demonstrates how rural areas are increasingly globalized and hybrid. Migrants in rural areas are agents in connecting rural areas beyond domestic and transnational systems. The social practices connecting rural areas are significant, as they challenge the notion of the rural as a national construct. Furthermore, this contribution emphasizes how spaces and places are stretched and linked through migrant social practices. This study points to the need to further explore the multiple ways that migration connects people and places.
Svensk Sammanfattning (Swedish Summary)

Thailändska kvinnor som kommer till den svenska landsbygden med sina svenska partners bygger sina nya liv genom att leva i två världar. Successivt skapar de en ny vardag i sina hem, i sina föreningar och på sitt arbete. Genom vänner och familjemedlemmar bygger de nätverk som kopplar samman olika platser i ett flöde av varor och information med hjälp av tekniska hjälpmedel såsom datorer, mobiltelefoner osv och genom de varor de köper och delar med sig av till varandra. De gör detta också genom det sätt på vilket de uppfostrar sina barn, tar hand om föräldrar och familj och genom det sätt de deltar i det lokalalivet på landsbygden i Sverige och i Thailand.


Syftet med studien är att undersöka hur thailändska migranter konstruerar och bygger sociala praktiker spatialt och temporalt. I avhandlingen diskuterar vi hur genus formar migranternas sociala praktiker; på vilken sätt dessa praktiker är konstruerade utifrån migranternas geografiska erfarenheter och slutligen hur sociala praktiker och migration kontextualiseras rumsamt.

Det empiriska materialet i studien är hämtat från flera källor. Det huvudsakliga empiriska datamaterialet utgörs av 16 narrativa intervjuer. Intervjuerna har haft fokus på thailändska kvinnors migrationsberättelser och deras dagliga aktiviteter. Övrigt material kommer från intervjuer med lokala aktörer, registerdata över befolkningen, mediala och vetenskapliga källor och deltagande observation. Det empiriska materialet analyserades tematiskt och kontextuellt.

Avhandlingen består av en sammanfattande kappa och fem artiklar. I kappan beskrivs sammanhanget och den teoretiska basen för att förstå den thailändska migrationen till Sverige, främst kvinnornas migration. I artikel I analyseras thailändska migrationsströmmar till Sverige med speciell fokus på makt och agency inom ramen för sociala praktiker. I artikel II studeras


Näckelord: Kön, genus, migration, sociala praktiker, landsbygd, translocalism, mikro-geografier, rörligheter, rumsliga relationer, fallstudie, narrativa intervjuer, feministisk kunskapsteori, Thailand, Sverige.
สรุปวิทยานิพนธ์ ฉบับภาษาไทย (Thai Summary)

ในวันธรรมดาแต่ละวันพลอยตื่นนอนและเตรียมตัวลูกๆให้พร้อมเพื่อไปโรงเรียน เด็กๆต้องขึ้นชีรจริงให้ตรงเวลาเพื่อไปเมื่อข้างๆมิฉะนั้นแล้วพลอยต้องขับรถไปส่งลูกๆของเธอโดยรถยนก้านducersที่เหลือของเธอทั้งเป็นกับเธอและเพื่อนๆไปโรงเรียนแล้ว

พลอยนั่งลงที่หน้าคอมพิวเตอร์ของเธอและดูนาฬิกาข้อมือเพื่อให้แน่นอนว่าของเธอที่ประเทศไทยจะกลับมาถึงบ้านแล้วหลังจากออกไปจ่ายตลาด พลอยโทรศัพท์หาแม่และพวกเธอก็พูดคุยถึงสิ่งของที่แม่ซื้อจากตลาดและกำหนดการของพลอยในวันนั้น

หลังจากวางหูโทรศัพท์ พลอยก็เตรียมอาหารบางอย่างสำหรับเด็กๆให้ตรงเวลาเพื่อให้เธอได้จากมีจากการเดินทางไปประเทศไทยครั้งล่าสุดและการมีจานข้างเคียง เรียงเกณฑ์เพื่อว่าจะใส่ใจและจะต้องวางแผนการเดินทางเข้าเมืองเพื่อไปชีวิตของเธอเพิ่ง

เมื่อเตรียมอาหารเสร็จ พลอยเดินออกไปทางประตูหลังบ้าน เดินข้ามสนามหญ้าไปยังโรงเรือนดัดแปลงขนาดใหญ่เพื่อไปร่วมพักผ่อน กินอาหารเช้ากับสามีของเธอและเหล่าลูกจ้างของพวกเขา

พลอยและสตรีผู้อพยพชาวไทยคนอื่นๆที่มาอยู่ตามชนบทในประเทศสวีเดนกับคู่สมรสของพวกเธอเริ่มสร้างชีวิตด้วยการอาศัยอยู่ในสองโลกนั่นก็คือ ประเทศไทยและประเทศสวีเดน

เมื่อเวลาผ่านไป สตรีผู้อพยพเหล่านี้ก็ได้สร้างชีวิตประจำวันขึ้นผ่านกิจกรรมและการสื่อสารต่างๆของพวกเขาที่บ้าน ชุมชน และสถานที่ทำงาน พวกเธอสร้างโครงสร้างและเครือข่ายผ่านทางพื้นผิวและครอบครัวและขยายเครือข่ายเหล่านี้ไปยังสถานที่ต่างๆ
ผู้อพยพทำสิ่งนี้โดยการใช้เทคโนโลยีต่างๆ เช่น คอมพิวเตอร์ โทรศัพท์มือถือ และพวกเข่าทำสิ่งนี้ผ่านสินค้าที่พวกเข่าซื้อและแลกเปลี่ยนกัน นอกจากนี้ พวกเข่าทำสิ่งนี้ผ่านการสร้างธุรกิจ การเลี้ยงลูก การดูแลบุตรและการครอบครัว และการเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของชุมชนท้องถิ่นของพวกเข่าตามชุมชนในประเทศสวีเดนและประเทศไทย

ต่างอยู่ภายใต้การกิจกรรมเรื่องเพศ การย้ายถิ่นฐานและการปฏิบัติทางสังคม วิทยานิพนธ์ฉบับนี้สังเกตุการเพื่อค้นคว้าวิธีการที่ผู้อพยพชาวไทยในประเทศสวีเดนใช้เพื่อสร้างความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างพื้นที่ชนบทผ่านกิจกรรมต่างๆในชีวิตประจำวัน

เมื่อเราถึงแม่สังคมศาสตร์โดยวิวิธวิจารณญาณ ผู้อพยพชาวไทยมีแนวโน้มที่จะอาศัยอยู่ในพื้นที่ชนบทของประเทศสวีเดนโดยทั่วไปแล้วพื้นที่ชนบทไม่ได้ถูกมองว่าเป็นสถานที่แห่งโลกกว้างหรือสถานที่รองรับผู้อพยพนานาชาติ ในทางตรงกันข้าม แนวความคิดเช่นนี้ในกรณีของผู้อพยพชาวไทยในประเทศสวีเดนแสดงให้เห็นถึงกลุ่มของการปฏิบัติทางสังคมที่เข้มข้นและเข้าขั้นชื่อชื่อพื้นที่ชนบทในประเทศสวีเดนในเชิงพื้นที่และเวลา

การศึกษานี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อค้นคว้าวิธีการที่สังคมของผู้อพยพชาวไทยสร้างและนำการปฏิบัติทางสังคมไปใช้ในเชิงพื้นที่และเวลา

วิทยานิพนธ์ฉบับนี้พร้อมพร้อมวิธีการปฏิบัติทางสังคมของผู้อพยพอย่างไร วิธีการที่การปฏิบัติทางสังคมถูกสร้างขึ้นภายในภูมิศาสตร์การย้ายถิ่นฐานของแต่ละปัจเจกบุคคล และวิธีการที่การปฏิบัติทางสังคมและการย้ายถิ่นฐานถูกกำหนดให้อยู่ในบริบทเชิงพื้นที่และสถานที่

ข้อมูลเชิงประจักษ์ของการศึกษานี้มาจากแหล่งข้อมูลต่างๆ ข้อมูลเชิงประจักษ์ปรากฏว่าได้มาจากกลการสัมภาษณ์เชิงเล่าเรื่อง
จำนวน 16 สัมภาษณ์ การสัมภาษณ์เหล่านี้เน้นเรื่องราวของการย้ายถิ่นฐานของสตรีและกิจกรรมในแต่ละวันของพวกเธอ

ข้อมูลอื่นๆได้มาจากการสัมภาษณ์เชิงบริบท ข้อมูลทะเบียนประชากร สื่อและแหล่งข้อมูลอื่นๆ รวมถึงการสังเกตโดยตรง รวมถึงการพิจารณาประเภทของข้อมูลทางกายภาพ ได้แก่การวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลเชิงประจักษ์ตามใจความสำคัญและตามบริบทเชิงสัมพัทธ์กับภูมิศาสตร์และช่วงชีวิต

วิทยานิพนธ์ฉบับนี้ประกอบไปด้วยบทหน้าและรายงานจำนวน 5 บท บทที่ 1 เริ่มต้นด้วยการทำความเข้าใจเรื่องการย้ายถิ่นฐานของชาวไทยไปยังประเทศสวีเดน

รายงานบทที่ 1 ศึกษาเรื่องการปฏิบัติทางสังคมในระดับชุมชน โดยศึกษากรณีการปฏิบัติของผู้หญิงชาวไทยและสวีเดนในแง่ทรัพยากรทางวัฒนธรรม

รายงานบทที่ 2 ศึกษาเรื่องการปฏิบัติทางสังคมในระดับชุมชน โดยศึกษากรณีการปฏิบัติทางสังคมที่เกิดขึ้นในชุมชนที่ต่างประเทศ

รายงานบทที่ 3 ศึกษากรณีการปฏิบัติทางสังคมในระดับชุมชน โดยศึกษากรณีการปฏิบัติทางสังคมที่เกิดขึ้นในชุมชนที่ต่างประเทศ

รายงานบทที่ 4 ศึกษากรณีการปฏิบัติทางสังคมในระดับชุมชน โดยศึกษากรณีการปฏิบัติทางสังคมที่เกิดขึ้นในชุมชนที่ต่างประเทศ

รายงานบทที่ 5 กล่าวถึงความสัมพันธ์เชิงพื้นที่ระหว่างชนบทในประเทศสวีเดนและชนบทในประเทศไทยที่ถูกสร้างขึ้นโดยนักลงทุนสวีเดน

รายงานเหล่านี้ต้องให้ความสำคัญกับสถานที่ต่างๆในท้องถิ่น ได้แก่บ้าน สถานที่ทำงาน และชุมชน รายงานเหล่านี้ศึกษากรณีการต่างๆที่
สดรีสร้างและก่อให้เกิดการปฏิบัติทางสังคม เช่น ผ่านทางอาหาร โครงการต่าง ๆ ของชุมชนและการพัฒนาธุรกิจของพวกเธอ

สดรีชาวไทยคือตัวแทนเพศของการปฏิบัติทางสังคมเหล่านี้และเป็นผู้ใช้ประโยชน์จากแหล่งข้อมูล วัสดุและเครือข่ายที่เฉพาะเจาะจงเพื่อช่วยประสานการทำงานที่สามารถพบได้ในชีวิตประจำวันของพวกเขา

ข้อมูลเชิงปริมาณที่ศึกษาในวิทยานิพนธ์ฉบับนี้ให้เห็นถึงความสำคัญของการปฏิบัติทางสังคมในแต่ละวันของดรีในการเชื่อมต่อกับพื้นที่ทั่วโลกในเชิงพื้นที่และเวลาต่าง ๆ

วิทยานิพนธ์ฉบับนี้เน้นความสำคัญของมุมมองการเชื่อมโยงระหว่างพื้นที่ เพื่อความเข้าใจในการปฏิบัติทางสังคมเพศ ในการศึกษามีการอภิปรายเพิ่มเติมเกี่ยวกับการเชื่อมโยงระหว่างพื้นที่โดยแสดงให้เห็นว่าการปฏิบัติทางสังคมนั้นได้ถูกปลูกฝังในตำแหน่งและระดับทางภูมิศาสตร์ที่หลากหลาย

สดรีไทยในการศึกษาในปรากฏการณ์เชิงขั้นในฐานะผู้ขับเคลื่อนสำคัญอย่างมีนัยยะของชุมชนทั่วโลกในแต่ละวันและทำหน้าที่เป็นพื้นที่และสถานที่เข้าด้วยกันในทุกวันตลอดช่วงชีวิตของพวกเขา

คำสำคัญ: เพศ การย้ายถิ่นฐาน การปฏิบัติทางสังคม ชนบท การเชื่อมโยงระหว่างพื้นที่ ภูมิศาสตร์จุลภาค การย้าย ความสัมพันธ์เชิงพื้นที่ การศึกษา การสัมภาษณ์เชิงลึก เรื่อง ช่วงชีวิต ญาณวิทยา ด้วยการเรียกร้องสิทธิสตรี ประเทศไทย ประเทศสวีเดน
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Appendix

List of Interviews in Sweden

- 15 Interviews with Thai women
- 2 Husbands or Partners of Thai women
- 1 Monk at rural Thai Buddhist Temple
- 5 Interviews with Swedish language instructors/administrators (1 individual, 4 in focus group)
- 4 Regional Planning and Policy Makers in regional development and migration issues

List of Interviews in Thailand

- 2 Interviews with Thai women who live in Sweden (1 woman I previously interviewed in Sweden)
- 1 Interview with Swedish man married to Thai women
- The Ambassador of Sweden to Thailand, Embassy of Sweden to Thailand
- Migration Officer, Embassy of Sweden to Thailand
- Migration Officer, Embassy of Sweden to Thailand
- Professor Dr. Supang Chantavanich, Director, Asian Research Centre for Migration, Chulalongkorn University
- Dr. Ratchada Jayagupta, Research Fellow on forced migration specializing in anti-human trafficking, Asian Research Centre for Migration, Chulalongkorn University
- Dr. Ratana Tosakul, Faculty of Sociology and Anthropology, Thammasat University
- Dr. Panitee Suksomboon, Faculty of Sociology and Anthropology, Thammasat University
- Dr. Sukanya Aimimtham, Associated Dean for Planning and Information, Khon Kaen University
- Dr. Thanapauge Chamaratana, Institute for Skill Development, Khon Kaen
- Dr Yupa Hanboonsong, Faculty of Agriculture, Khon Kaen University
- Mr. Tao Sodsai, Department of Employment, Khon Kaen
- Ms. Kaewmala, Author of Sex Talk and Thai feminist writer