

UNIVERSITY OF VAASA

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Rights and Fairness: A Cross-Cultural Analysis of the Representation of  
Gender Relations in Marriages in Vietnamese and British Online  
Comments

Master's thesis

Vaasa 2015



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**UNIVERSITY OF VAASA****Faculty of Philosophy**

<b>Discipline:</b>	Intercultural Studies in Communication and Administration – Language and Communication
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<b>Master's Thesis:</b>	Rights and fairness: A cross-cultural analysis of the representation of gender relations in marriage in Vietnamese and British online comments.
<b>Degree:</b>	Master of Arts
<b>Date:</b>	2015
<b>Supervisor</b>	Daniel Rellstab

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**ABSTRACT**

Many researches have been conducted with the motivation of discovering a precise definition of gender equality (Beveridge & Velluti 2008; Verloo 2007). However, this conception depends on many factors relating to specific features of each society, and it also changes over time. After thousands of year of patriarchy, starting from the 19th Century, with the emergence of feminist theory in Europe, debates endure over women's right and equality in every essential aspect of society.

Even though women's position in society and family has improved, the long period of patriarchal ideology still has its influence, especially in developing countries where the feminist movements were formed later than in Europe. Women in developing countries are still fighting for their rights while many women in developed countries have gained decisive achievements. In addition to that, each culture possesses its own perspective on specific phenomena, and these perspectives differ when we consider complicated issues, such as gender.

This study therefore seeks to examine how people in different cultures perceive their gender roles and how their percipience influences their action by analyzing online comments under articles about household chore division in two tabloids. The first tabloid is from Vietnam ([www.afamily.vn](http://www.afamily.vn)), a typical developing country; the second one is from Great Britain ([www.dailymail.co.uk](http://www.dailymail.co.uk)), one of the leaders of feminist movements.

By combining qualitative content analysis by Mayring (2000), the analysis of cultural models as developed by Paul Gee (2008), with a stylistic analysis by Arp & Johnson (2009), and comparative research methods by Brislin (1976) the research not only demonstrates how gender and gender relation are constructed in different cultural contexts but also discloses different conceptions of gender roles in both the Vietnamese and British comments. Apparently, ultimate masculine power in the past still impacts on the conception of gender roles in both Vietnamese and British case and makes men resist sharing domestic chore with women. However, the needs of women are not really a fair share but actually being respected and appreciated by their partner for what they have done.

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**KEYWORDS:** Gender roles, household chore division, marriage, discourse analysis, qualitative content analysis, stylistic devices, cultural model, online tabloid comments.



## 1 INTRODUCTION

In this era of globalization, it is important for people to understand the similarities and differences between their culture and the others'. This fact becomes more essential and sophisticated when we consider the aspect of marriage. Many researches have been conducted in order to analyze the cross-culture differences of gender roles attitude in marriage, however, most of them use surveys, questionnaires or statistics to clarify the problem (Sergin & Nabi 2006). Therefore, with the effort of finding a different way to approach the issue, this paper aims to adopt discourse analysis, qualitative content analysis and the analysis of stylistic devices as methods to demonstrate cultural differences by analyzing the comments of readers under articles in a Vietnamese and a British online tabloid: [www.afamily.vn](http://www.afamily.vn) and [www.dailymail.co.uk](http://www.dailymail.co.uk)

Although marriage is a universal term, each society and each culture has their own concept of marriage (Peters & Dush 2009). Generally, marriage is the union of two people who share an intimate and sexual relationship and are responsible for each other in every aspect of life. However, there are many kinds of marriage, such as monogamous, polygamous, same sex and temporary, and each type can be characterized by different features. Therefore, in order to achieve a specific and effective conclusion, this paper focuses on only one type of marriage, which is the case of opposite sex union.

Because every social phenomenon is affected by culture and tradition, marriage is not an exception. Since marriage contains many considerable issues, doing a comparative research on marital issues between two countries contributes an illustrative example of cross-cultural differences towards further researches in the field. Particularly, gender roles attitudes are chosen as the core of this research since it is the element that is formed from a social point of view and it dramatically impacts on other marital matters, such as decision-making and division of household labor.

## 1.1 Previous studies

There are many researches on gender roles attitudes, its origination, and its development (York 2011; DeBiaggi 2001; Baluja 2002). Gender roles attitudes are closely associated with the social acceptance of the roles, such as bread earner or child-care giver, which are appropriate for men and women (Fischer & Arnold 1994: 166). There are two main ideas regarding this issue. The first idea is egalitarianism, considering that both men and women can possess the same roles while the second, more traditional one namely tradition assumes that men and women are suitable for different roles in society (Fischer & Arnold 1994: 166). However, even though researchers expect similar responds from people who have the same idea, it is difficult for egalitarian group to totally eliminate traditional gender roles in their life, and what is considered traditional behaviors also depends on personal experience and understanding.

To study gender roles attitudes is not to evaluate the labor division according to gender, but it is to observe and analyze the belief, behavior and reaction of men and women towards their role in society generally and in family particularly. Because researchers in the field usually use interview and statistic to collect and appraise their data (Sergin & Nabi 2006), this paper aims to fill in the niche and consider the problem through the lens of participatory online journalism by applying the method of qualitative analysis. With the desire of exploring the issue from a different perspective, the purpose of this research is to examine the impacts of social and cultural issues on the reflection of gender roles in marriage within the genre of online newspapers for women.

The comments of readers under two articles on the same topic from British and Vietnamese online newspapers are chosen as the material of the research. The Vietnamese site is <http://www.afamily.vn>, an online newspaper targeting women who are married or going to get married. This newspaper was established on the first of June 2008 and after 2 years, *A Family* has become a popular Vietnamese websites for women. The site provides readers with information about parenting, marriage, health, beauty, shopping, etc., with the ambition of supporting women to be confident, beautiful, successful and especially happy with their family. Meanwhile,

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk> or *MailOnline*, the British online newspaper chosen in this research is a very popular website with three different homepages for India, the United Kingdom and the United States. Although the printed version of this newspaper strongly reflects political ideas of the Conservative Party in the United Kingdom, *MailOnline* attracts readers by entertainment news. There are many components in the *MailOnline*, namely Sport, TV&Showbiz, Health, Science, Travel, etc., however, the concentration of this research is the section named *Femail*, which focuses on the needs of women and have similar aims with the *A Family*.

The research named “Cultural models and metaphors for Marriage: An analysis of Discourse at Japanese wedding receptions” (Dunn 2004) has applied discourse analysis to evaluate Japanese metaphors spoken at wedding receptions in order to sketch the cultural model of marriage from that result. The comparison in that paper between the cases of Japan and the United States (US) has demonstrated many similarities and differences between the two cultures. Even though Dunn’s work and this research contain correspondence in methodology, the data collection and material are different. This paper pays attention to written comments in online journalism about marital issues while Dunn’s paper analyzes spoken language in videotapes of wedding ceremonies. The wedding is a formal place where attendants are relatives and friends of the bride and groom, while online comment section is the place where users are anonymous and they discuss many aspects of marital fields. Moreover, this research does not seek for the general conception about marriage of people in different cultures but furthermore, the concentration of this research is gender roles attitudes, one important and specific element in marital issues as they are visible in these online comments.

## 1.2 Research questions

**RQ1:** How do commenters self-categorize themselves?

**RQ2:** What are the perspectives commenters have on household labor division based on gender rolls?

**RQ3:** What are the similarities and differences between the perspectives of commenters in the comment of the Vietnamese and British tabloids?

### 1.3 Purpose of research

The purpose of this paper is not to consider some special cases, such as same-sex or intercultural marriage, but to focus on cultural models of gender roles attitudes in general marriage. In order to demonstrate cultural models, discourse analysis is essential because language is an important method that people use to express the social concept in their mind. Moreover, since the internet has created a new life which is intertwined with the life offline, giving interest in the way they present their idea online becomes necessary. There have been some studies using discourse analysis to evaluate cultural models in marriage, such as the research of Temmerman and Voorde (2013) which applies critical analysis of the representation of men in two women's magazines; and Jacques and Radtke (2012) who use discourse analysis to analyze the negotiation of young women in marriage and motherhood. However, none of them mention online articles and the influences of the internet identity on the perspective of exhibition. In addition, currently there has not been any research on the topic of comparing the cultural model of the role of gender in marriage between Vietnam and Britain. Because the topic of gender in marriage contains many different aspects, the research is not possible to cover every point in detail. Therefore, this research generally pays attention to the comparison between Vietnam and Britain in gender roles attitudes as they appear in online comments.

### 1.4 Thesis overview

With the purpose of evaluating the similarities and differences in household labor division based on gender roles between two distinct cultures, it is important for us to firstly understand the concept of gender and the relation of gender and marriage,

especially in Vietnam and the United Kingdom. In the scope of this research, we will evaluate the literature of gender and marriage in previous studies to see how they are defined and their historical development in order to achieve a whole picture of gender roles in marriage in modern time. The cases of Vietnamese and British marriage will also be mentioned because they are the concentration of our analysis chapter. Moreover, the representation of marriage and gender in the media will be presented to illustrate the impact of media on social issues and vice versa. Especially, we will consider the definitions, characteristics and historical development of participatory online newspapers and online comments to broaden the knowledge of the genre which will be applied as a background of our analysis chapter.

Additionally, this study uses four main methods to evaluate the material analysis, which are qualitative content analysis; discourse analysis and cultural model; the analysis of stylistic devices; and a comparative method of cross-culture differences. The theory of each of these methods will be presented to provide readers with a profound understanding of the means we use to analyze the comments under online articles to reconstruct the gender role models in Vietnam and the United Kingdom and then compare them with each other to see the similarities and differences between the two cases.

In the analysis part, we firstly introduce our material which consists of two online articles in [www.afamily.vn](http://www.afamily.vn), the Vietnamese online tabloid and [www.dailymail.co.uk](http://www.dailymail.co.uk), the British one, and the comments in the comment section under these two articles. The summarization of the articles is provided in order for reader to understand the context. After that, the analysis section will be divided into two different parts, which represent the concentration of our research, namely the self-categorization of commenters and the debate on gender roles in domestic chore division. In the self-categorization of commenters, depending on the content of their comment, we consider serious contributors and non-serious contributors as two types of commenters. The motivation of each type of commenter not only demonstrates the way they categorize themselves in relation with other social roles, but also illustrates their assumption of the rights and duties attached to each category. The debate on gender roles in domestic chore division

is the part where we analyze the perspectives of commenters on gender issue in marriage. There are three main kinds of perspective, which are the conservative view, the gender equality supporters and the flexible types. However, not all of the perspectives appear in Vietnamese and British tabloids. These differences and similarities between two distinct cultures will be compared in the part named case comparison of this research with the purpose of evaluating the diversity of cultural models of gender roles in marriage.

## 2 GENDER AND MARRIAGE

In the last few decades, there have been many changes in the role of women in society generally and in family particularly. Because women have proven their ability to promote their career and financially support their family, the traditional ideology of gender roles has become unsuitable in many cases. However, the traditional ideology has been deeply ingrained in our societies for a long period of time, therefore, conflict between the two ideologies is predictable. Debates do not only happen among scholars, but they also take place between husbands and wives in families. The division of household labor is one of the main problems that married couples have to deal with.

While conservative men deny participating in domestic works, the shortage of time prevents women from fulfilling both their job and their duty in family. Since family is the smallest unit of a society, the reactions of wives and husbands to domestic conflict reflect not only the traditional ideology of gender roles but also the renovated one in that society. Studying the problem from personal perspectives may not be able to build an overview picture, but it still gives us some clues of the social impacts on gender roles attitudes in marriage.

### 2.1 Gender – A Definition

The researches on gender have been developed dramatically in the past years due to its considerable impact on social activities. There have been mainly four different theoretical explanations for the definition of gender (Risman 2004). The first explanation discusses the origin of sex distinction in terms of biological and/or social genres (Udry 2000; Bem 1993). The second one casts a doubt on the first theory by emphasizing the importance of social structure over biology and individual learning in the process of constituting gender oriented behavior (Epstein 1988). The third concept also argues about gender formation as a result of social interactions instead of self-consciousness and its consequence for gender inequality (West and Zimmerman 1987). The last conceptualization of gender is an integrative approach which considers all

internal and external factors alongside with the biological sex distinction (England & Browne 1992). According to Connell (2002) and Lorber (1994), gender is a socially constructed stratification system. Lorber (1994) emphasized the influences of gender on every social activity on both individual and organizational scales. By studying gender difference, we understand the cause of sexual discrimination because without it, nothing can be used as a method of measurement for inequality. (Risman 2004: 431)

In her research, Risman (2004) defines gender as a social structure with the meaning of structure identified as both constraint and choice (Blau 1997). In other words, people not only follow gender difference as a social norm but they also make a choice for themselves when it comes to gender oriented behaviors. Studying social structure of gender helps researchers explain the reason an individual prefers one gendered path over another. Oppositely, the possibility of the choice they make depends largely on social structure. Particularly, social structure offers a network of positions which goes along with specific gender oriented sets of behaviors and anticipations for people to make a choice (Burt 1982). Therefore, gender as a social structure has an ability of shaping individual's expectation in a steady framework and due to the difference in the expectations about each gender, stratification is created. Moreover, Risman (2004) disagrees with the idea of Epstein (1988) and Kanter (1977) that if men and women experience the same social structure and gender anticipation, it will lead to the result of gender difference extinction. According to Risman, in this situation, it is necessary to take external impacts, such as cultural interactional expectations based on gender category into account.

On the other hand, individual and social structure have an interactive relationship (Giddens 1984). Social structure is created by individual's reflexivity and the way people interpret their own life. Therefore, in order to understand the reason people act in a specific structure, it is important to evaluate every aspect of social life from the smallest to the most recognizable one. Based on Giddens' theory of social structure as both constraint and created by action, Connell (1987) draws a conclusion that action can go for or against social structure, but never escape from it.

Consequently, studying gender as a social structure means considering intertwined layers of factors that not only have a great impact on human behavior but also interact with each other to create a complex system. Basically, gender consciousness of people creates stratification in every field and by categorizing people into different types, this social structure leads to both constraints and chances for their behaviors. The affection of gender is measured from three angles, which are the individual point of view with gender orientation of selves, the interaction point of view concerning cultural expectations on different categories, and the organizational point of view where everything is gender specific. (Risman 2004: 433)

## 2.2 Gender and Marriage in Vietnam and the United Kingdom

Due to the great influence of gender on every aspects of life, it is easy to understand the importance of evaluating the relation between this issue and marriage. In order to conduct further research, it is needed to clarify the definition of marriage. Especially, based on the interest of this paper, we will firstly concentrate on historical and cross cultural perspectives on marriage, and then consider the influence of gender on marriage in both Vietnamese and British cases.

The definition of marriage has considerably changed over the past two centuries due to the emergence of industrialization and economic development (Peters & Dush 2009). Therefore, it is necessary to evaluate the transformation process to deeply understand the origin of the concept, the factors that it is influenced by and the new interpretation on marriage that people can make based on researches and observations.

First of all, according to Thornton (2009: 4–5), in the past, families were central units of almost all societies and the relationships of husband-wife and parent-children were the most important factors of that unit. It was a place where both love and conflict were involved, therefore, marriage was considered the most important event in the life of men and women. Almost all people were married while the ones who did not have their own family were expected to live with their relatives. Moreover, marriage also carried

religious or spiritual values in many cultures. The motivations of marriage were diverse in different societies yet namely economic purposes, companionship, reproduction or social status support.

The significant variation in the definition of marriage was observed when researchers considered different historical cultures and societies. There were many distinct patterns of marriage and family in terms of the number of wife or husband, the proper age to get married, the content of each family and even the place where they lived. The relationship between the married couple and their elderly parents also varied a lot from one culture to another. While some societies allowed young people to have companionship before marriage, others only considered it acceptable when everything was decided by their parents. (Thornton 2009: 6)

However, due to the changes in technology and social organization in the last two centuries, the notion of marriage and family has been dramatically influenced in every aspect. According to Thornton (2005: 16–17), most of European and North American societies have changed their concentration from the family unit to other kinds of organizations regarding educational, technical, political or communicational purposes. The emergence of industrialization in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries shifted the focus of men and then women from family to their working place. With the participation of women in labor force, the household duty division based on gender roles is no longer applicable because men are not the only ones who financially support their family. People now experience independent life from their early age because of educational or professional reasons, which changes the controlling power of parents on the life of their children. Nowadays, especially in Western societies, people do not have to get married in order to be economically independent from their family, however, in many cases, they need to reach a certain amount of incomes to start thinking about marriage. (Thornton 2009: 19–20)

In addition, religion also plays an important part in the transformation of marriage. In the past, due to the lack of media, communication facilities and technology development, people did not have a chance to approach not only the diversity of

religions but scientific achievements as well. As a result, at that time, religion held a supreme position in defining morality and guiding the life style of people. (Hunter 1991) Today, mass media enables people to access various religions while science and education help them understand the world and natural phenomena. Therefore, the position of religion in the life of people has also been affected. People no longer refer to religion as a mandatory responsibility and faithfulness but it is rather an individual spirituality. (Thornton, Axinn & Xie 2007: 48–50)

Besides, one of the most influential factors in the transformation of marriage is developmental idealism which encourages “individualism, youthful autonomy, high ages at marriage, high status of women, family planning, and low fertility as positive attributes” (Thornton 2009: 21). Young people, especially women from the Enlightenment period on have been motivated to live independently and equally to men in both professional and household fields. Additionally, the emergence of individualism has facilitated the new perspective on the relationship among family members. Particularly, parents from the 1920s to the 1980s have continuously supported their children to be independent rather than being obedient (Alwin 1988).

As a result of all aforementioned changes in society, people start to reshape their perspective on marriage and being single. Although most people still expect marriage in their life (Glenn & Marquardt 2001: 4), they no longer consider marriage to be the only way to achieve happiness, and the idea of not getting married becomes more appreciable, especially in the West. Furthermore, by the support of government for individualism and freedom in marriage, marital dissolution becomes easier and more popular, alongside with the less negative prejudice toward it from society. (Thornton & Young-DeMarco 2001)

Moreover, it is essential to consider the issue of same-sex marriage which has changed the meaning of marriage in general. According to Coontz (2005), regardless of what we have been taught about “traditional marriage”, marriage actually has no constant meaning and can be systematically changed to adjust to different social genres and requirements. Apparently, in present day, the emergence of same-sex marriage has

brought the term “marriage” to a whole new stage. Due to the motivation of individualism and the legal and social support of freedom in marriage, many gay and lesbian couples have entered civil partnership in many countries (Kimport 2013: 14). This fact has proven that the definition of marriage is adjustable to adapt to social ideology, and it does not have the same meaning in different societies.

Gender roles attitudes in marriage are the reflection of traditional responsibilities of husband and wife in a family. Traditional gender roles assign the duty of breadwinning for men and housework along with childcare and relationship maintenance for women. This assignment is considered an essential solution to avoid marital conflict because if female equality meant symmetrical roles, for instance both men and women have their own career and share housework together, it might lead to enduring disagreement in family. (Beavers 1982: 50)

Additionally, since the husband is still widely acknowledged as financial supporter for family in many societies, his career is considered an important contribution that can keep him from participating in housework. In contrast, even though the percentage of women in labor force is relatively equal to men, wife’s career is still not primary in family because of her traditional duties (Steil 1997). In fact, the conservative view of gender roles in marriage has established an obstacle for women in the process of improving their career and given a low appraisal of their contribution to family.

Moreover, the ideology of gender roles has a strong impact on the division of household labor due to previous study which proved that household labor division is still largely based on gender (Ferree 1991). Men’s contribution to housework range from one-quarter to one-third and it is mostly in house maintenance and gardening (Shelton 1992).

Generally, after a thousand years being dominated by China, the ideology of Vietnamese people has been dramatically influenced by Confucianism (Bui & Morash 1999: 775). In the past, Vietnamese women did not have the right to access to education and the fact is that before 1943, 98% women were illiterate (Nguyen 2011: 128). They

even could not make the decision for their own lives because of the three-obedience ideology which states that a woman has to obey her father before marriage, her husband after the wedding and her son after her spouse passes away. Consequently, the wife was expected to absolutely obey her husband and her in-law. As a result, in the child development issue, female children in Vietnamese traditional family were treated unequally to male. Even though women were subordinate to men, they took the main responsibility of financing the family. Vietnamese women participated in agricultural works and in trade market and they simultaneously had the legal right to a share of their patrilineal inheritance. (Bui & Morash 1999: 775)

However, the French colonization and the involvement of the United States in the conflict between the North and the South of Vietnam in the past century have differentiated the situation dramatically. Nowadays, every Vietnamese citizen has the right to make their own decision in marriage. Moreover, the role of Vietnamese women in society has been meliorated significantly, they are no longer despised as they were before in their family. The property ownership and inheritance of Vietnamese women are warranted by the law independently from their husbands, and both husband and wife share the responsibilities of the household decision-making (Vietnamese Law of Gender Equality No.73/2006/QH11). Nonetheless, although every child is now treated equally regardless of their gender, at least before the law, having a female child is still considered as an unlucky fact for the majority of Vietnamese family because of the lineage continuation (World Trade Press 2010: 7).

Likewise in the United Kingdom, in the early 18 century, marriage mostly involved in the purpose of achieving a stable family unit or properties transaction. Except for Queen Elizabeth, none of the British women had the right to possess property or to inherit. Daniel Defoe, an English essayist even described marriage at that time as “legalized prostitution” (Newton 2010: 42). By getting married, British women were forced to be slaves of their husbands. Throughout the 19th century, British women have struggled against inequity and gradually found their place in the society and in their family. Nowadays, the fact that individualism is deeply rooted in British society and the financial independence of women has led to two results: the decreasing of birth rates

and the increasing of divorce rates. British parents tend to give birth in their old age and many of them choose to stay as single parent. (Gunnell, Middleton, Whitley, Dorling & Frankel 2003: 602)

### 3 GENDER AND MARRIAGE IN THE MEDIA

According to White (1997), media does not entirely represent “facts” from the perspective of critical linguistics, but it is perceived as a manipulated product of ideology which can be interpreted based on the situation (Cameron 1998). Although from a specific angle, a part of media discourse belongs to social reality, the relation between media and reality is actually more complex. Fairclough (1995) claimed that media and social reality had the ability to interfere in the interpretation process of each other. Therefore, there are many controversial issues that emerge when we consider the level of interaction between media and social reality. One of those issues is gender difference. In the scope of this paper, the reflection of gender in media and the impact of media on gender roles in public and private domain will be evaluated to construct a foundation for further research on tabloid comments on household labor division.

It has been claimed by many researchers that even though the appearance of media is becoming female-oriented, the majority of media professionals and media institute owners are men (Van Zoonen 1998; Ross and Sreberny-Mohammadi 1997). This factor leads to the consequence of audience expectation as male (Walsh 2001), representation of men and women in an unequal relationship (Clark 1992; Fowler 1991) or gender stereotypes (Caldas Coulthard 1996). Even though the level of influence that media has on people’s perception of gender is a controversial issue (Tuchman 1996), it is clear that it contributes in shaping an image of specific gender roles (Bergvall 1999).

One of the common cases that prove gender representation on media is based on stereotypes is when masculine images are applied for public domain such as political and economic programs, and feminine images for media products related to household topics (Page 2003: 560). The fact is that although the rate of women having high incomes is increasing (Leonard 2001), they still struggle with gender inequality especially on the administrative level (Davidson & Cooper 1992; Walsh 2001). The situation becomes more difficult for women who are responsible for both public and private roles (Garnsey & Rees 1996). Fairclough (1995: 60) argues that media discourse

analysis provides us with a special measurement to evaluate this complex situation, as long as we consider it as a material analysis.

Discussing the relation between marriage and media, Segrin and Nabi (2006) analyze the association among television viewing, idealistic expectation about marriage and immediate and idealized marital intentions. The research conducted questionnaires with 258 undergraduate students in the United States who were unmarried in order to avoid the influence of direct experiences. The questionnaires contain open-ended essays to analyze the students' expectations of marriage, and the survey to measure behavioral intentions, television viewing, genre-specific television viewing, and perceived television reality (Segrin & Nabi 2006: 251). Segrin and Nabi have found the possibility that the romantic television programs and the presentation of marriage in children's programs have impacts on the process of constructing human's beliefs about marriage. Although the number of participants is not significant, and there are many unmentioned indirect influences on the participants' perception of marriage, one thing that we can be certain of after this research is that the way mass media constitutes the image of marriage is not based on the truth but it has specific purposes and favors the advantage of some groups of people. Because of the development of the internet, people can access many sources of information which origin and reliability cannot be controlled. Since each source aims at specific group of audiences, hence, marriage is represented in many different ways are illustrated in many different ways. It is a challenge to find a particular image of marriage in mass media in case we do not divide the media into distinct regions or sections. (Segrin & Nabi 2006)

#### 4 PARTICIPATORY ONLINE JOURNALISM

The notion of participatory journalism was stated by Bowman and Willis in 2003 as the active participation of audiences in gathering, presenting, reporting and propagating the news (Bowman and Willis 2003: 9). This form of online journalism has enabled readers to be actively engaged in the social issues represented in newspapers by commenting their ideas in the section under each article.

In fact, the participation of audiences in participatory journalism does not just appear in the comment section, the audience can participate in almost all five stages of news production. Table 1 in the research of Hermida, Domingo, Heinonen, Paulussen, Quandt, Reich, Singer and Vujnovich in 2011 has identified the contribution of readers in each stage as follows:

**TABLE 1:** Stages of news production (Hermida, Domingo, Heinonen, Paulussen, Quandt, Reich, Singer & Vujnovich 2011: 9)

Stage	Participatory formats
1) Access/observation: The initial information-gathering stage at which source material for a story is generated, such as eyewitness accounts and audio-visual contributions.	Citizen media: Photographs, video and other media submitted by users, usually vetted by journalists.
2) Selection/filtering: The “gatekeeping” stage when decisions are made about what should be reported or published.	None
3) Processing/editing: The stage at which a story is created, including the writing and editing of an item for publication.	Citizen blogs: Blogs created by users hosted on the news organization’s website. Citizen stories: Written submissions from readers on topical issues, including suggestions for news stories, selected and edited by

	journalists for publication on the website.
4) Distribution: The stage at which a story is disseminated or made available for reading and, potentially, discussion	<p>Content hierarchy: News stories ranked according to audience ratings, often based on the most read or emailed content.</p> <p>Social networking: Distribution of links to stories through social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook.</p>
5) Interpretation: The stage at which a story that has been produced and published is opened up to comment readers and discussion.	<p>Collective interviews: Chats with journalists or invited guests, with questions submitted by typically moderated by a news professional. These are usually webcast in audio or video, or transcribed live, offering a sense of interactivity and immediacy.</p> <p>Comments: Views on a story or other online item, which users typically submit by filling in a form on the bottom of the item.</p> <p>Forums: Discussions led by journalists or initiated by readers. Questions can be posed by the newsroom and submissions either fully or reactively moderated, or by readers.</p> <p>Journalist blogs: Authored by one or more journalists, with short articles in reverse chronological order. Journalist blogs (also called “j-blogs”) often are associated with a specific topic or perspective, with the facility for readers to comment on entries.</p> <p>Polls: Topical questions posed by journalists, with users asked to make</p>

	<p>a multiple choice or binary response. These polls provide instant and quantifiable feedback to users.</p>
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Since this paper focuses on the comments part in the stage of interpretation in order to draw a specific scale of culture model perceived by the commenters of two different countries, the content of articles and other stages are not taken in to account in the research.

Although Alfred Hermida and his colleagues have disclosed the positive contribution of participants in constructing democratic media, there are some negative viewpoints from the news editors, who are interviewees of the research, in term of the quality of the readers' comments. According to them, people who make a comment or pay attention to that of others are only among the minority of users, and the irrational comments are also one of the problems (Hermida, Domingo, Heinonen, Paulussen, Quandt, Reich, Singer & Vujnovich, 2011: 14–15).

The genre of online comments originated from readers' habit of sending their feedback to express their opinion on the content of articles to the editor (Burger & Luginbuhl 2005: 49). Nowadays, audiences of online newspapers are provided with the possibility of posting their comments not only on the content but also on the opinion of other commenters easily in the comment section under each article. The commenters sometimes form a group of people who know each other and consequently, they keep the stance that they usually take (Rellstab 2015: 112). This is not the only feature of comments in online newspaper that resembles those in chat rooms. According to Beißwenger (2001, 2007) and Herring and Panyametheekul (2007), comments in both of chatroom and online newspapers adopt "multiple, simultaneous, and interweaved discourse threads" and "writers apply addressivity, the vocative use of the intended addressee's name" (Rellstab 2015: 113). In the comment section, style and the length of comments are different, based on which user, newspaper and topic they belong to (Burger & Luginbühl 2005: 441–442). In addition, talking about the censorship in online newspapers, Rellstab (2015: 113) states that since the mid-2000s, negative

comments related to racism, pornography, violence, discrimination and insults have been banned or blocked due to moderation policies. In many online newspapers, commenters need to register with their real name and address. Nevertheless, in some cases, comments with negative content still exist regardless of the aforementioned censorship (Hughey & Daniels 2013: 335–336).

## 5 DATA AND METHODOLOGY

This study uses three main methods to evaluate the material analysis, which are discourse analysis and cultural model analysis, qualitative content analysis and comparative method of cross-culture differences. Moreover, this study also takes into account three important stylistic devices, namely irony, rhetorical question and symbol. They are mentioned according to the process of the study as discourse analysis, cultural model and comparative method of cross-culture differences.

### 5.1 Discourse analysis and cultural model

After collecting all the data, the first methodology used in this research is Discourse analysis. Although there are 57 varieties of discourse analysis, they all share the same idea that disagrees with the definition of language as an impartial method to illustrate the world (Atkinson, Bauer & Gaskell 2000: 172). This paper approaches discourse analysis in the way stated by Paul Gee (2008: 19–50) because through the analyzing process, the aim of this research is signalized clearly step by step. According to Gee, there are three tasks contained in critical discourse analysis.

One task is what we call *utterance-type meaning task*. This task involves the study of correlations between form and function in language at the level of utterance-type meaning. *Form* here means things like morphemes, words, phrases, or other syntactic structures (e.g., the subject position of a sentence). *Function* means meaning or the communicative purpose a form carries out. The other task is what we call the *utterance-token meaning* (or situated meaning) *task*. This task involves the study of correlations between form and function in language at the level of utterance-token meanings. Essentially, this task involves discovering the situation-specific or situated meanings of forms used in specific contexts of use. (Gee 2008: 25)

And he continues:

Some forms of discourse analysis add a third task to the two (the utterance-type meaning task and the situated meaning task) discussed so far. They also study the ways in which either or both language-form correlations at the utterance-type

level (Task 1) and situated meanings (Task 2) are associated with social practices (Task 3). (Gee 2008: 32)

The aforementioned tasks make the way in which people from different cultures use language to express their cultural models and the relation between linguistic and those models become understandable. However, there are also some disadvantages of this methodology that can be mentioned, among them is the problem of the reliability and validity of discourse analysis. Many researches have been conducted with the purpose of evaluating this problem. “In psychology, for example, much experimental and qualitative research depends upon the suppression of variability or the marginalization of instances that do not fit the story being told by the researcher ...”. (Atkinson, Bauer, Gaskell 2000: 187)

Because this research evaluates a strong relation between utterances and cultural models, it is important to understand the notion and characteristics of this concept. According to Paul Gee, cultural models are standards of human behavior in everyday life in a particular society (Gee 2008: 40). Cultural models are, according to Gee (1999: 60), “emblematic visions of an idealized, “normal”, “typical” reality”. Cultural models are perceived through discourses and personal experience in everyday life, and they can change depending on the situation and context. Therefore, cultural models can be considered as a rule of the game in which players try to stick to the rules. Consequently, critical discourse analysis is a way to explore the deeper reality which lies under discourses. The next step depends on the result of previous stage. Researcher will use that result to evaluate the social standards in the focused field, however, these standards are not applicable to all societies, but only one distinct group of people.

## 5.2 Qualitative content analysis

According to Mayring (2000), the qualitative content analysis offers “a bundle of techniques for systematic text analysis”. Particularly, these advantages contain four points, which are mentioned by Mayring as followed:

- Fitting the material into a model of communication: It should be determined on what part of the communication inferences shall be made, to aspects of the communicator (his experiences, opinions feelings), to the situation of text production, to the socio-cultural background, to the text itself or to the effect of the message.
- Rules of analysis: The material is to be analyzed step by step, following rules of procedure, devising the material into content analytical units.
- Categories in the center of analysis: The aspects of text interpretation, following the research questions, are put into categories, which were carefully founded and revised within the process of analysis (feedback loops).
- Criteria of reliability and validity: The procedure has the pretension to be inter-subjectively comprehensible, to compare the results with other studies in the sense of triangulation and to carry out checks for reliability. (Mayring 2000)

In the scope of this research, the communicators are commenters, the situation of text production is the one of the production of online comments on stories in a Vietnamese and British tabloids. We apply the “rules of analysis” to analyze the data collected from the comment section and then categorize our results. After that, we compare the results of the Vietnamese and the British cases.

All of the transcript of interviews, discourses, documents, etc. can be the subject of qualitative content analysis. There are two levels of content that can be evaluated in qualitative content analysis, namely primary content with the main points of text; and the latent content with background information. (Mayring 2000)

The process of qualitative content analysis concentrates on two approaches, which are inductive category development and inductive category application. The first approach is “oriented to the reductive processes formulated within the psychology of text processing (Ballstaedt, Mandl, Schnotz & Tergan 1981; Dijk 1980)” (Mayring 2000). The aim of this approach is:

... to formulate a criterion of definition, derived from theoretical background and research question, which determines the aspects of the textual material taken into account. Following this criterion the material is worked through and categories are tentative and step by step deduced. (Mayring 2000)

Furthermore, as it is stated by Schreier (2012), there is a possibility of combining discourse analysis and qualitative content analysis regardless of their differences. Due to the concentration of discourse analysis on the relation between language and social reality, critical discourse analysis is “less a method, and more an attitude toward research and your research question”. Therefore, if we apply qualitative content analysis as a “service of the critical-interpretive attitude underlying discourse analysis”, we can conduct our research with both of the two methods. (Schreier 2012)

### 5.3 Stylistic devices

This study analyzes three stylistic devices which are symbol, irony and rhetorical question adopted by commenters to put across their ideas about the problem. The reason we analyze these stylistic devices is because people tend to use stylistic devices when they feel the need of emphasizing their point of view, therefore, by analyzing these devices, we can achieve the main concepts in the most vivid way of expression.

Although there are many kinds of stylistic devices, the limitation of this study does not allow us to go through all of them. The three aforementioned devices are significantly chosen because they are the most commonly used in this context. Evaluating stylistic devices means detecting the signal as indicator of the phrase or sentence or paragraph that is expressed in an unordinary way with the purpose of giving a new meaning, feeling or idea to the text (Arp & Johnson 2009: 705). Each comment is considered a study unit which carries personal ideas about how gender roles should be played in domestic chore division. Therefore, by interpreting the whole material, we can gain widely-held perceptions of marriage in both Vietnamese and British culture.

### 5.4 Comparative method of cross-culture differences

After having the cultural models of each community of online commenters, the next method applied to study the issue deeper is the comparative method of cross-culture

differences. Particularly, the purposes of this stage are accuracy, effectiveness, representativeness of each case and standard of attitude and action aside from the research (Brislin 1976: 216). In comparing cross-culture differences, the methodology of the emic-etic distinction is one of the most important ways to approach the final result. According to the differentiation of Brislin (1976), an emic analysis concentrates on the behavior of each social group, especially what they consider to be important and meaningful. Meanwhile, etic analysis focuses on generalizing those things that different cultures treasure to build a theory of human behavior. These methods help establish a rational view from details to overall.

In this paper, emic analysis is applied to demonstrate the differences in marital issue between Vietnam and Britain in many possible aspects. By examining each potential explanation for each data, the research desires to provide a broad viewpoint and to create the space for latter researches. However, the translation is an obstacle in the process of conducting comparative research because languages are not equivalent so it is difficult to maintain the meaning of every single word but still make it understandable for foreigners. Therefore, appropriate editing is hard but essential to warranty the quality of the research

### 5.5 Data

Material of this research comes from two online tabloids which are [www.dailymail.co.uk](http://www.dailymail.co.uk) and [www.afamily.vn](http://www.afamily.vn). *The Daily Mail* and *A Family* are tabloids targeting readers seeking entertaining news and coverage of crucial news events. While *The Daily Mail* is British, *A Family* is Vietnamese.

The article from *The Daily Mail* named “Why do career women still think they are born to do housework” is written by Jenni Murray (<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-2377272/Career-women-versus-housework-Why-professionals-think-theyre-born-housewives.html>). It was published on 25th July 2013 in the section called *Femail* which covers all topics under women’s concern, such as fashion, food, beauty. The Vietnamese article “Don’t you know how to be a

women?” by writer Ngoc Duy was published on the 22nd October 2013 in the section named Family issues which includes all marital problems (<http://www.afamily.vn/tinh-yeu-hon-nhan/co-khong-biet-lam-dan-ba-a-20131018091327290.chn>). We access the two articles and their comments in 2013. These two articles demonstrate domestic chore division by illustrating some cases of housewives and working women. The reason these articles were chosen for this study is because they deal with the same topic and were published in the same year in notable tabloids of their respective society.

However, rather than concentrating on the content of the two aforementioned articles, this study pays attention to the non-synchronous comments under them. The research material consists of 47 comments in Vietnamese from *A Family* and 306 comments in English from *The Daily Mail*. These comments can be accessed easily without the need of logging into the websites. Vietnamese data has been translated into English according to the criteria of keeping both of the content and the way of expression as close to the source as possible.

## 6 ANALYSIS

In this part of the research, we first summarize the two online articles in [www.afamily.vn](http://www.afamily.vn), the Vietnamese online tabloid, and [www.dailymail.co.uk](http://www.dailymail.co.uk), the British one in order for reader to understand the context. In the analysis section, there are two different parts, namely the self-categorization of commenters and the debate on gender roles in domestic chore division.

### 6.1 Content of the two articles

The British article is about the story of Jenni Murray, who is a BBC broadcaster. Before getting married, as a young girl, she was discontented about the fact that her mother had to do all of the housework after her office hours while her father was spending his time relaxing on his chair and reading the newspaper. He thought that housework made a man look “unmanly” while her mother, who used to be a housewife for several years, believed that women should stay at home and be in charge of household chores. After being persuaded by her daughter that her working does not mean her husband cannot earn enough money for their living, Jenni’s mother started her job as a receptionist at the town hall and she loved it. Murray understood that her father was a good man who did not mind helping his wife, however, it was the culture her parents were raised in that encouraged their belief and differentiated their role in the family. After having her own family, Murray became the breadwinner when David, her husband decided to leave his job to take care of their babies. It was difficult for him to accommodate to the new way of living as a house husband due to the social opprobrium surrounding the role (Appendix 1).

Meanwhile, the Vietnamese case is the narration of two women’s experiences. One of them is Huong who lives in Hanoi with her husband and child. Every day, after her working hours, she comes back home and does all of the cooking, cleaning, doing laundry and taking care of her kid without the help of her husband. The workload is

heavy and she has no time to spend on herself. In case she complains about it, her husband will shout at her and compare her to his friend's wife. It is an unfair comparison for Huong because that woman just stays at home while Huong is a financially independent wife. The salary of her husband is not enough to afford their living. Once, her health was in not a good condition so she asked her husband to help her with houseworks. They ended up losing their temper and he slapped her in the face, asking her if she did not know how to be a woman. The other woman in the article is Hanh from Hai Phong, a smaller city than Hanoi. Hanh lives with her husband and her in-laws in the same house. Her story is similar to Huong's, except for the more pressure that she has to bear from her in-laws because they think that houseworks are the responsibility of a daughter-in-law. Both of Huong and Hanh are stuck in their marriage, thinking that divorcing the husband because he does not help is not a tolerable reason (Appendix 2).

## 6.2 Method of analysis

Methodically, the comments under each article will be gathered into different groups according to their content. Each group represents one perspective of commenters on gender roles in household chore division. Comments with similar concepts are analyzed in order to demonstrate the significant ways of expression in each case study and also build up different opinions on domestic gender equality. The name of these groups are conservative commenters; commenters who support gender equality; and the flexible types. Furthermore, this study analyzes three stylistic devices which are symbol, irony and rhetorical question (Arp & Johnson 2009: 705) adopted by commenters to put across their ideas about the problem.

## 6.3 Self-categorization of commenters

Apparently, it is difficult to analyze the social background of participants in online comments if the commenters can post anonymously. However, we will evaluate how

commenters allocate themselves in society in the comments, and what their motivations are. In our opinion, it is important to figure out the typical types of motivations throughout the whole materials first because they hold the key to interpret self-categorization of commenters.

Not depending on the opinion of commenters, types of motivation are constructed based on the comments. In the case of our material, after considering both Vietnamese and British comments, we decided to categorize commenters into two main types which are serious contributors and non-serious contributors. Serious contributors share experience, give advice to other people or provide new aspects relating to the content of the article, while non-serious contributors provide ignorant comments showing the lack of information and provoking comments which offensively criticize others and stimulate negative reactions. By analyzing the motivation of each type of comment, we can see the rights and duties attached to each category that commenters try to balance in their comments.

The purpose of this section is analyzing the social position each commenter adopts to portray him or herself due to the fact that people approach an issue from different angles. The advantages and disadvantages of each social position cause commenters to decide what point they consider to be acceptable for them, or in some cases, for both sides. In a comment, commenter can allocate into more than one position. For example, in the same comment, a commenter who claims to be a male illustrates himself in his relationship between him and his sister who is entirely in charge of her in-laws' houseworks, and in a relation with his wife. There is a close connection between the benefit commenters value the most in term of domestic labour division and the social position in which they allocate themselves. The conflict of self-benefit in this case is undeniable and the solution people come up with in the end is their most defined conception of gender roles in marriage that they have in their mind.

### 6.3.1 Comments of non-serious contributors

Although only a minority of comments in both tabloids is ignorant and provoking, they are still valuable for further comparison because of the interesting fact that ignorant comments only appear in the Vietnamese tabloid.

First of all, the motivation of provoking comments is to draw attention of readers to different issue and/or stimulate an aggressive respond. They come in the form of a short sentence or a joke and are usually made by commenters who take men's side. For example, Vietnamese commenter named rangkingboy stated that:

- (1) rangkingboy · 21h14, ngày 22-10-2013 · Hà Nội  
Wife working on housework and husband working on wife is the truth for many generations

It is unsure whether rangkingboy is married or not, but his motivation is clearly to protect men's benefit. It proves that he categorizes himself as a husband who has compensated for not doing housework by serving his wife in the bedroom. The reason we consider this comment a provoking one is because it insults women in two ways. Not only does it disrespect women with a conservative perspective on gender roles, it also mentions a controversial problem regarding to the intimate relation between spouses. Therefore, this comment definitely will receive negative reactions from female commenters. The British tabloid also has similar a comment coming from a user named USA:

- (2) USA, Oklahoma City, United States, 8 months ago  
Don't forget to give service in the bedroom ladies. You were born for that too

Basically, these two aforementioned comments use the same method to emphasize their provoking motivation and express their disregard to women. As a man, commenter USA does not take any effort to explain why women are born to be housewives and

servants in the bedroom. Usually, people defend their opinion against their opponent when they are afraid of the potential threats or changes. The fact that commenter USA does not protect his idea but instead creates more tension between men and women makes him even more conservative toward the problem. Using his provoking statement, this commenter illustrates the constant advantage of men and the subordinate role of women to men in a family from his perspective.

Secondly, even though the number of these comments does not stand out, it is important to mention the ignorant type in *A Family* tabloid because it is one of the factors that keep Vietnamese and British cases distinct. The definition of ignorance in this research refers to the lack of information and experience of the commenter in term of gender roles in marriage and housework division. Commenter “dang van trang” offers a typical comment like that:

- (3) dang van trang · 23h37, ngày 22-10-2013 qua điện thoại · Hà Nội  
OMG! I guess not many husbands are similar to these husbands? If there are many of them then women are so poor.

Commenter categorizes herself as a young Vietnamese girl who has not married yet and her motivation is simply expressing her surprise after reading the article.

### 6.3.2 Comments of serious contributors

First of all, the majority of the comments in the Vietnamese and British articles are serious contributors' comments. The motivation of commenters in this case is seeking for sympathy, showing off what they are proud of or simply advising other people who have the same situation. These commenters allocate themselves as experts who know what labour division is supposed to be and believe in it. Therefore, it is important to consider the role commenters perceives in their family in each comment in order to evaluate the advantages they have from their opinion.

### 6.3.2.1 The Vietnamese case

In one of the Vietnamese comments, user Đặng T Hồng Lua tells us the story of her family where her mother does all the work.

- (4) Đặng T Hồng Lua · 19h13, ngày 05-12-2013 · TP HCM  
 I have a perfect mother who is the one and only breadwinner of my family, my house is always clean with tasty meals every day, when I lived with my parents, I did not have to do anything, just washing dishes sometimes but with my mother standing beside to help me wash the pans. In the dinner time, she cooked rice and side dishes beforehand, I just had to warm them up, put vegetables into a hot pan so that they can be green, generally I was so blissful, love my mother so much after reading this article 😊

This commenter has a feminine Vietnamese name and she claims to be a daughter in her family, therefore, her advantage in this situation is that she does not have to participate in doing housework. Moreover, the examples in the Vietnamese article prove to her that not all women can do the same thing as her mother does. Consequently, the motivation of other family members, including the daughter, when they encourage the idea of a perfect mother who earns money and does all houseworks is based on their benefit and their appreciation for the sacrifice of the mother. However, this commenter may change her perspective and opinion when she has her own family because at that time, her position will be different.

Another comment of a daughter belongs to user named moc\_lan, which is also a feminine name:

- (5) moc\_lan · 15h36, ngày 24-10-2013 · TP HCM  
 haiz, I don't know but if I meet a man like that I will divorce him for real. In my house, if my mother is tired after work, my father will do everything while my mother watches drama. After cooking my father has to call us many times, until the drama finishes do we come to the dining table :D. My father also works (he is the breadwinner but always has to ask my mother for money because he gives her everything he earns), but he has more free time than my mother, so he takes care of the housework. (Showing off my father :D)

The story of moc\_lan is completely contrary to commenter Đặng T. Hồng Lua's. She was raised in a family where the father does the majority of chores and is a breadwinner. Being different from the daughter of the aforementioned comment, moc\_lan does not express her admiration for her father by describing the benefit she has from her father's work. Instead, the pride she has is based on the way he treats her mother, or in other words, his wife. Therefore, the motivation of this commenter when sharing her story is to tell people about the capability of men in doing houseworks. It can be seen clearly that moc\_lan consistently stands on the side of women because she has grown up in an environment where men even do more than their fair share in houseworks.

Additionally, there are cases in which commenters take more than one social role to illustrate their opinion. The story of commenter Heosuacuaanh can be considered as a typical instance:

(6) Heosuacuaanh · 09h39, ngày 23-10-2013 · TP HCM

I always remember that my mother told me: "The point of getting married is to live happily, if it is getting worst then why get married?". Therefore, even though my husband is lazy, I "fix" him in the right time. If he talks back or abuses me, I will walk him to the door (fortunately it does not happen until now). My farther-in-law sometimes tells my mother-in-law something like "women are hasty and cannot do anything" or "whatever job that women participate in will be ruined", I always reply him: "I don't think so, women are foresighted so it is not true that whatever women participate in will be ruined". My father-in-law keeps silence =))

She adopts three different roles here which are a daughter, a wife and a daughter-in-law. As a daughter, she was taught by her mother to pursuit happiness as the goal of marriage. Particularly, happiness can be interpreted as respecting and sharing the workload with your spouse. With that idea in mind, she has grown up and taken the role of a wife who is confident enough to keep her relationship on track. She even argues with her father-in-law to protect her mother-in-law from not being respected. In her story, this commenter is not an observer but she plays a central and decisive role. By her positive statements, it can be assumed that the motivation of commenter Heosuacuaanh

is to express her pride in the way she was brought up and the way she maintains a good relationships with her husband and parents-in-law.

There is also a case in which a commenter who has a male name in Vietnamese supports women's rights:

(7) PhongTM · 03h15, ngày 23-10-2013 · Hà Nội

In this issue, I am more on the side of women, sometimes when her husband was on a business trip, my sister came home to visit my mother but her mother-in-law kept calling her to return to that house to cook. It is understandable if that is for her husband, but it is non-sense to cook for her father-in-law and her brother-in-law who has not got married.

He shares a story of his sister and shows his disagreement with the way she is treated by her family-in-law. According to this commenter, the responsibility of women is cooking for their husband but not his whole family. By his statement, PhongTM appears in two different roles which are as husband in a relationship with his wife and as brother in a relationship with his sister. As a man thinking about domestic labour division, PhongTM assumes that cooking is the duty of women, however, as a brother, he opposes the idea of his sister having no time for visiting her own parents because of the same duty she has for her in-laws. In fact, this is a dilemma between the benefit of a husband and a brother whose sister is living with her family-in-law. Consequently, if men allocate themselves in the relation with women as a member of his own family, they may understand the difficulties women have to deal with. However, the conservative way of thinking and the motivation of protecting their own advantage are still rooted deeply in their minds.

In addition, other motivations of wise comments is simply to tell their story and seek for sympathy. Commenters in this situation usually allocate themselves as women who have no one to share housework with. For example, commenter keo\_ngot\_hihi stated that:

(8) keo\_ngot\_hihi · 10h25, ngày 23-10-2013 · Hà Nội

I have no one to complain to. So boring. I am a servant with 8 hours working in the office. Having higher salary than my husband's but I still have to do housework and taking care of the kids. hic the earliest time for me to have a shower is at 11PM every day.

It is not clear why she accepts the circumstance, however, her case proves that there are people who are aware of gender inequality but choose to do nothing to fight for their rights. Therefore, if women demand to be liberated from doing houseworks, it is important that they need to change their own perspective and see themselves equal to men first.

Based on the existence of women who do not have a courage to take action, many commenters find it necessary to use their wise comments to give them some advice on how to liberate themselves from doing houseworks. In Vietnamese articles, almost all of the commenters who are motivated by this reason have for themselves a feminine user name. In their comments, user Hai My, Bông Bíp and Chulinhanh suggest many different solutions for women in order to face their problem:

(9) Bông Bíp · 13h10, ngày 24-10-2013 · Hà Nội

I admire these women who can bear the jobs that even machines cannot do. It is going to be like the story of the donkey and a shirt, when you are down, your kid will be the poorest one.

(10) Chulinhanh · 02h44, ngày 23-10-2013 · Nước ngoài

You always have to say that: I am tired, I have low blood pressure, or I have problems with my bones, etc.,. If they don't ask about your health then you have to say it yourself, your working schedule as well (remember to plus 2 hours more for traffic jam). If you act like you are strong, the work load will be added to be suitable with your strength. You just have to take care of your children, housework can wait to be done latter, or if it is not finished, it doesn't matter. In case you come home late? Your in-laws are starving then they will cook by themselves or buy something to eat. If your mother in-law feels pity for her son being hungry after work because his wife said that she would come back late from work, then she will cook for him. If they are not disabilities, do not do anything for them. However, you can be resented a little bit. You will pass away if you try to satisfy your in-laws. But remember to keep smiling and be polite to them 😊

In this part of our research, we do not pay attention to the content of these advices but evaluate the way these commenters allocate themselves instead. It is clear that they consider their family as a battlefield where they have to deal with their husband and parents-in-law. This attitude can be explained as the result of a serious dispute over the benefit of two sides. Even though both sides live under the same roof, they think of housework as the duty of the others and try their best to avoid doing it. In the past, women had no other choice but accepting their role as a housewife and could not say anything for their rights due to the limitation created by social prejudices. However, nowadays the role of women has changed dramatically that they can pursue their career and achieve financial independence. Therefore, these commenters are an accurate representation of modern women who are demanding for the revolution inside a family as well. Their motivation is to affirm that the devotion to a family is not only a duty of women but it must spontaneously and equally come from each and every family member.

#### 6.3.2.2 The British case

The main type of comment on the British article belongs to the serious contributors. Commenters in this case are motivated by the needs of defending what they consider standard gender equality against other's opinions, educating people or simply sharing their experience to seek for sympathy. Moreover, hardly do they adopt any specific role such as wife, husband, daughter or son in their statement, especially when their motivation is not seeking for sympathy. Instead, they express their opinion in an objective way in order to increase the reliability of their declaration. However, according to the benefit they try to protect, their self-categorization can be guessed.

Commenters who claim to be male tend to think that their social role is more important than women's. They deny women achievement in order to maintain their benefits at home. For instance, commenter Primax stated that:

(11) Primax, Desk bound, United Kingdom, 8 months ago

If my 15 year old child spoke to me like that they'd feel the back of my hand. Until women compete equally with men in the workplace and contribute the same level of finances to the household then it's only right that they should compensate for their lack of financial contribution in other ways. Cooking, cleaning and keeping her man happy in the bedroom seem a small price to pay.

It is not clear in this case whether the commenter has been married or his wife is a housewife or not. However, he places men in general in the position of the family breadwinner and uses it as an excuse to not do any housework. By renouncing women equal contributions in the workplace and financial situation of the family, he protects the benefit of husbands in a conservative way. Another way to emphasize masculine power is indicating the differences between two genders by commenter named Jack:

(12) Jack, Perth, 1 year ago

Despite what women say, you'll find yourself single quickly if you walk around with an apron on and a little fluffy duster in your hand doing the housework. It is much better to walk through the door and say "Eh woman, this place is a bloody mess. How about watching less tv and keeping the place clean". A woman wants a man who lays down the law, otherwise she might as well date a fellow woman.

He defines the duty for each gender by assigning heavy works to men and housework to women and declares that it is based on women's desire. Even though their reasons are different, the motivation of both aforementioned comments is to defend men who do not participate in doing housework against criticisms and maintain their benefits.

Certainly, there are also commenters who protect women's rights. They cast a doubt on the reasons men use to defend themselves against criticism for not doing housework and explain why they should share the workload with their partner. Even though their statements are made in an objective way due to the fact that they do not adopt any specific role, based on the benefit they protect, it can be assumed that they stand on the side of wives.

(13) Salma, La la land, Germany, 8 months ago

There are so many comments here from men who wish that gender roles could go back to the way they used to be. I don't think this is as ideal as it may seem to you. While women were expected to do all of the housework, there were much

greater pressures on men too. As the sole breadwinner, they faced all the responsibility of providing for their families. If they lost their job, became ill, or were not able to cope in some way, their family would have nothing to fall back on. If you look at it, men from that generation die younger than women, are more prone to heart disease, etc. Surely that is partly linked to the greater levels of stress. At least in modern families, the husband and wife share the financial responsibilities and you have the security of knowing that your wife can take care of herself and the children. If your wife is helping out with providing for the family, surely you can at least clean up after yourself?

(14) fair2middlin, MiddleUSA, 8 months ago

Cutting the grass once a week, changing the car oil 3 times a year and topping up the windshield washer fluid does not balance against the everyday, over and over, always the same endless housework most women are somehow “genetically” predisposed to do. Thinking so way overstates those contributions, which are occasional - very occasional, and in my home these few things are usually done with an “I’m doing you a favor!” attitude. It is long past time for all household members to do their share - without being told - and it is up to today's parents to educate their children.

Not only are commenters motivated by the needs of defending what they believe to be equality in domestic labour division, they also find it important to identify underlying reasons of existing gender discrimination with the desire of helping other people to recognize and eliminate them from their society. Commenters named ann b and LG are two among a lot of people who have blamed education for causing gender inequality in family.

(15) ann b, paris, 8 months ago

It’s not about rights. It’s about fairness. If you both go out to work, then you both do equal shares of the work at home. However, it is essential that the kids, of both sexes, are brought up to do their bit. Otherwise, they will be useless when they are married. Even before that, they need to know what needs doing, and how to do it, before they leave home. They will struggle otherwise.

(16) LG, Cymru, 8 months ago

My mother - born 1918 - worked but expected me, but not my brothers, to help with the chores, my father - born 1921 - worked from home made us all share chores. End result, one brother who is perfectly house trained and one who is an idle hound who will not even lay a table.

The motivation of these commenters is to give advice to parents that children, regardless of their gender, should be taught to do housework properly since early age.

The chance is that this advice might come from people who suffer from gender inequality created by parents in their family, therefore they understand the consequence of this matter. In a role of a child raised in a conservative environment, these commenters try to protect their rights to have the same workload with their siblings of different gender.

The other advice comes from commenter named Sabotage:

(17) Sabotage, Kalispell, 8 months ago

Generally, no, housework isn't that overwhelming. But sometimes it would be nice to have someone else do it, or lend a hand. If I have to come home and cook, someone else could offer to wash the dishes, or run the vacuum or clean the bathroom or, well, anything. Personally, the thing that irks me the most is when I am not only the only person doing the cooking, shopping and cleaning, but when the other person never even says "good diner" or "thanks," or even worse, acts like you don't do anything and they do just as much or more than you. That's the person who usually makes messes and doesn't clean them up, and I think that's what a lot of women are complaining about.

According to this commenter, the problem is not only the workload itself but it is the attitude of a partner toward the other. The appreciation that spouses have for each other will encourage them to share the work and be thankful for what they have. By allocating herself as a wife, this commenter does not try to preserve women's rights by arguing about the fair share with men in neither professional career nor housework, but she emphasizes the needs of being understood and respected for what she has done. That is an intangible value that not many commenters pay attention to, however, it can be seen as one of the most important factors because the mindset has an enormous impact on human behavior.

In addition to giving advice, sharing experience to seek for sympathy is one of the common purposes of the serious contributors. They tend to blame the different standard of tidiness between them and their spouse for the cause of conflict. Commenters identifying themselves as women in these comments usually accept the situation rather than keeping complaining or fighting for their equality because it not only does not change anything but also creates tension in their relationship.

- (18) Kitty2013, Manchester, United Kingdom, 8 months ago  
My partner and I used to have so many fights about him not doing what I considered to be his fair share. His argument was that the house 'didn't look dirty' and he was selectively blind to any form of mess. We got around it by me agreeing to do most of the chores, but as a result, I pay less towards the bills. It's cheaper than getting a cleaner!
- (19) hatemail, Manchester, 8 months ago  
the problem is that my Mrs has much higher standards of cleanliness and tidyness than I do. if I was left to myself I would live like the slob I am and people would say my house needed a woman's touch

The two comments above discuss the same problem but from different perspectives. From a wife's point of view, commenter Kitty2013 considers compromising with her husband on household labour division an in vain effort. By compensating doing housework with paying less money toward the bills, she feels that her benefit has been protected and no longer does she have to complain about this problem anymore. Her motivation when telling her story is to share her experience, and to provide a suggestion to people who are struggling in this situation. Even though her suggestion is in contrast to what feminists believe in, it is worth to be considered in case women values the harmony of their relationship and there is a way for them to feel being compensated.

Last but not least, the motivation of showing off what commenters are proud of is one of the most valuable factors for us to evaluate the way people categorize themselves and to find out which benefit they treasure the most. Although the ideal amount of work division differs from case to case, commenters who are satisfied with their situation usually have a spouse that meets their relationship expectation. For instance, commenter named Tab stated that:

- (20) Tab, UK, United Kingdom, 8 months ago  
both my husband and i work longish hours and we share the home stuff. I do most of the housework and all of the shopping and cooking, he does the gardening, outside stuff, laundry and ironing. I love him for it - i know he'll never clean a bathroom but i haven't picked up an iron in over a decade so that's a great compromise for me!

In this comment, she categorizes herself as a wife who has her own career and her husband shares with her part of the housework. If we look closer at the way Tab and her husband divide the workload, it does reflect the traditional gender roles which demands women to cook and do housework and men to do heavy jobs like gardening or house maintenance. The only difference in this case is that her husband is in charge of doing laundry and ironing. It is hard to claim what is the exact fair share in chores division, however, the idea of the work being shared is enough for this commenter to feel satisfied with her husband because by doing so, he shows her his respect and proves that the benefit is equally divided between them. In another case, commenter named Fiona Williams states that:

(21) Fiona Williams, Dundee, Tayside, 8 months ago

Mmm - we both work although I am the higher earner by a bit. I do most of the housework and laundry although when I lose the plot my husband does a bit. But, he does the car repairs and maintenance, the garden and the d.i.y.. I have a first class honours degree and a masters and I hate housework but in order to have one parent at home at all times, he works night shifts. To have him at home during the day is invaluable so I have to put up and shut up. Night shift is far more exhausting than my office job and I understand that, furthermore he has absolutely no social life because of it.. So thank you Andrew Williams - fish and chips tonight?

As a wife, she also does most of the housework, but to her, it is all compensated by the fact that her husband works night shifts to take care of their child during daytime. Each family faces their own problems and what is considered a best deal for both wife and husband also varies a lot in each case. However, the key point for them when finding a solution for housework fair share is the feeling of being understood and respected.

#### 6.4 Debates on gender roles in domestic chore divisions

Gender roles equality has always been a controversial topic of discussion, especially when it comes to housework division. This research does not attempt to figure out the answer for the question: “Are women really born to do housework?”, but our aim is to observe the existing perspective that people adopt to evaluate the problem. In each case

of British and Vietnamese tabloids, we categorize the comments into two/three groups which indicate how the materials reflect perception of commenters on gender roles equality.

#### 6.4.1 The British case

After evaluating the content of comments under the British article, we decided to construct three groups with three different points of view on the relation between women and houseworks. The first group contains conservative comments, the second group supports gender equality and the third group falls into the flexible type which emphasizes the importance of the agreement between spouses and takes labour distribution based on gender roles for granted.

##### 6.4.1.1 The conservative view

Under the British article, many comments are quite sexist when they claim that the role of women is being housewives. The explanation for that statement can be that it is either an instinct of human being or a commission assigned by God. This concept is so deeply rooted in the society that it is used by many other commenters to defeat the idea of fair chore division. “God” and “nature” are the means they adopt to describe the consistent social conditioning for each role since the beginning of human history. Using these symbols, they emphatically assert that labour division based on gender is not under human’s control, and it is impossible for us to change it.

- (22) Ashenkorren, Suffolk, 1 year ago  
 Why do women still think they should keep the kids in a split while the husband keeps working and paying out. Who knows, perhaps women are not that bright? I mean they still think a man should fix the car, get into the loft to patch a hole, settle a dispute with the neighbour, see what that bad noise is downstairs. The world is a sexist place, BUT it is the difference between the two sexes that make it work. Silly article - also the one over riding fact in this is evolution, women have had the home maker role and you're better at it. You can't fight nature.

Another commenter named Paul calls women doing houseworks the “basic instinct” of humans and he applies the symbol of the “feminist stick” to refer to the fact that gender roles modification is a miracle that will never happen.

- (23) Paul, up Narth, 1 year ago  
Because woman like the house to look nicer than men.... you cant change basic instinct no matter how much you shake your feminist stick!

Commenter Rusty even indicates that labour division for each gender is so “normal” that it is not worth mentioning. The symbol of “media bubble” in his/her comment illustrates that media is covering us with ideologies which control our way of thinking and make us unaware of reality.

- (24) Rusty, England, United Kingdom, 1 year ago  
It's what's known outside of the London media bubble as “normal...”

In order to clarify Rusty’s idea, we can consider Gordon Webster’s comment that symbolizes the idea in *The Daily Mail* article as a “little box”, referring to the narrow vision toward the problem of Ms Murray.

- (25) Gordon Webster, Dundee, 1 year ago  
When are you going to grow up and stop playing the victim Ms Murray? The majority of people have a division of household labour that they are happy with. Try looking outside your own little box.

Moreover, it is necessary to mention the jokes which indicate women’s vocation for houseworks. For example, commenter geewizz and carefreeeeeeee state that:

- (26) geewizz, uk, 1 year ago  
Women get married in white for a very good reason - to match the other kitchen appliances.

- (27) carefreeeeeeee, France, 1 year ago  
The reason women have smaller feet than men is so that they can get closer to the sink.....that's a joke by the way.

Their made up explanations are different from the truth readers know or expect it to be. Everyone understands that their statement is not true, however their point about the women's roles in family has been clearly stressed. The clues that women have smaller feet and they choose to wear a white dress in their wedding help these commenter prove that women are not only born to take their domestic role but also consciously agree with that.

Additionally, some commenters consider themselves as reward for their wives, such as commenter topgun54:

- (28) topgun54, Bolton, 1 year ago  
my wife loves doing all the housework, when she has done well I let her have her reward....me, she is a very lucky woman.

Apparently, his comment adopts both verbal and situational irony to create a joke referring to the relation between husband and wife. This relation is obviously normal to every couple but it is irony the way he calls himself a "reward" and his wife a "lucky women" because it implies that sex is his duty, and by doing that duty, he has fulfilled his fair share in domestic works.

Moreover, because of the strong effect of rhetorical questions, many commenters have applied them to make their statement become more powerful. For example, commenter Fedup50 uses rhetorical questions about the reason female rabbits lining their bed with fur and salmon swimming upstream to spawn to imply that women being nurturing and men being protective is human instinct.

- (29) Fedup50, Newcastle upon Tyne, United Kingdom, 1 year ago  
Why are men more protective and women more nurturing? Why do birds build nests? Why do female rabbits line their bed with fur? Why do salmon swim upstream to spawn? Social conditioning, my eye. One answer Instinct. Just because the human animal can educate itself and rationalise doesn't stop instinct or genetic memory winning out in the end.

Considering the statement of Fedup50 as a reply to an article about gender roles in domestic work division, it can be understood that being nurturing in this situation means

being responsible for houseworks. In other words, according to this commenter, doing houseworks is the role assigned to women by nature, and they inherit their role from their ancestors unconsciously without the needs of learning.

Not only do commenters claim that women are born with their instinct of doing houseworks, another commenter named Niz also points out that women “have a cleaning fetish”, which means that they themselves love doing chores. His rhetorical question is about the reason why his daughter starts cleaning every time she pays him a visit while he is a single man who is capable of doing everything on his own.

(30) niz, Cornwall, 1 year ago

It's called choice. No one asks them to have a cleaning fetish, they just do. Single man, does the; cleaning, cooking, washing, gardening, car maintenance and DIY, yet as soon as my daughter visits, she gets a duster out. WHY?

Certainly the answer of his question lies right on the previous sentence, but by phrasing his comment into a rhetorical question, he emphasizes the free will of women when it comes to houseworks, and simultaneously implies a criticism about women who spoil their child and husband by doing so much for them.

This problem is precisely discussed by many other commenters as well. For instance, commenter Perdita mentions an insecure feeling of women when they let their son or husband do the chores as one of the reason why men refuse doing their fair share. In Perdita's opinion, women fall into a dilemma where they want their men to be more responsible at home while they themselves do not educate their sons to do houseworks in a proper way and accordingly, they cannot appreciate the result of men's works. Once again, the rhetorical question helps commenters highlight their idea, which in this case is the careless attitude of men toward houseworks as a result of women's behavior.

(31) perdita, leeeeeeeeeeds, 1 year ago

The answer lies here, in the comments section. Many women would rather do it themselves then have to nag, or they feel they could do it better themselves, so why bother? If a mother has brought her son up to 'help' with chores, it is always seen as that: help, not an essential part of growing up. Like many women, I was encouraged to do housework as a child, whilst brother was encouraged to watch.

We should raise our children to work at these things from a young age, it will benefit everyone when they finally get their own home. Times have changed, woman have to work too. My husband cooks (really well), cleans the kitchen and bathroom (without asking) and maintains a full time demanding job. It's more fun cooking and working together, and it means things are done quicker, leaving more time for relaxing.....

On the other hand, some commenters blame women for desiring to take on both domestic and social roles, which leads to their overloaded situation. One of the examples is this following comment:

- (32) ct, Scotland, 1 year ago  
No , the question should be. Why do housewives expect to be career women?

The rhetorical question in this comment implies that women who are all born to be housewives should not pursuit their career because it is too much for them. Another example for this idea is the comment of Babalegi:

- (33) Babalegi, Northern Transvaal, 1 year ago  
Women wanted to go out to work. Now live with the consequences. This article is just another piece of misandrist BS. Women want to work, so suddenly housework becomes the man's problem? Get lost!

With his mindset that housework is totally not under men's responsibility, this commenter finds it difficult to accept that career women need their husband to do their fair share at home. His rhetorical question refers to working as an extra role for women, and if they want to work, they are better fulfilling their basic role first.

Moreover, commenters also use the story of Ms. Jenni Murray to illustrate their opinions on feminism and gender roles in family. By elaborating specific details of her pictures and her personal information, commenters make their attempt to categorize Murray into a typical kind of women who have a conventional point of view. This process helps their criticism become more convincing and reliable. For example, in the following comment, Mr. Inflammatory mentions the name of the radio programme that Jenni Murray works on:

- (34) Mr Inflammatory, London, 1 year ago  
 “Strange, isn’t it, that every discussion about feminism ends up with who does the dishes”.....Not really, more something along the lines of how white, privileged, middle-class feminists are completely detached from reality. Feminism is not something you discuss - you either accept it without question or be ostracised. Nice to see an article about equality from someone who works on a programme called “Woman's Hour”.

By using verbal irony and the two contrasting terms “equality” and “Woman’s hour”, Jenni Murray has been portrayed as a sexist woman whose idea is subjective and inaccurate. Eventually, the effect of this expression is to sharpen the statement in previous sentences of the comment, which disagrees with the article’s content because according to Mr. Inflammatory, in real life, people are aware that they need to follow feminism in order to fit in their society, therefore, what is presented in the article is just the one sided view point of Jenni Murray. Feminism plays an important part in liberating women, however, if people think that they have obtained equality, mentioning feminism turns out to be redundant.

Nonetheless, the definition of equality is not the same for everyone. Some commenters complain about the superiority of women in the career path where they have so many privileges for being a woman, and for that reason, gender equality means no housework for men. They come up with some evidences to prove their belief:

- (35) Magnus Carta, United Dystopia, 1 year ago  
 Equal? Some are clearly more equal than others! The schooling curriculum, reading material and examination methods have been feminized to raise girls up by dragging boys down, resulting in boys falling dramatically behind in every subject. Girls account for 70% graduates in the average university, 70% of medical students are women, the private sector is overflowing with quotas and positive discrimination, women in their 20s now out-earn men (even in traditional careers like engineering), the public sector is dominated by the 'old girls network,' women retire 5 years earlier than men (at the expense of men's longevity). Maybe Murray would like to swap all that for less housework? It seems no matter how much privilege is bestowed upon modern women they'll always greedily demand yet more.

Even though the statistic in this comment is not reliable because of the lack of references, commenter Magnus has clearly made his basic point that women do not

appreciate what they have, and they cannot see the big picture of their situation. His rhetorical question can be interpreted as an ironic suggestion for women to be aware of their privilege and to do housework as a compensation for that.

Moreover, a lot of comments blame women for spoiling their sons, and consequently pushing the next generation into the old track.

- (36) Rosie, London, United Kingdom, 1 year ago  
 Men are not naturally dirty creatures who like to live in filth. Commenters who want us to believe that women are only doing housework because men wouldn't mind if it wasn't done are not fooling anyone. How many men do you know who don't want to eat from clean plates, don't want to sleep in clean beds, don't want to wear clean clothes? I don't know any. I do know men who pretend they don't mind so that their nearest and dearest female relatives will do the cleaning for them. Stop doing it, ladies: they really will do it themselves.

The commenter named Rosie has clarified the myth that men do not care about the hygiene condition of their house. Using a rhetorical question, she claims that both men and women love to live in a clean place, however, men tend to ignore housework so that they can rely on their mothers or wives for doing it for them.

#### 6.4.1.2 Comments supporting gender equality

In contrast, many comments agree with the idea of the article, stating that women have the rights to pursue their career and men should do their fair share in houseworks. People of this group tend to describe their belief as an innovating idea.

- (37) Minnie the Minx, UK, 1 year ago  
 If a woman is working then her man needs to step up and help out

For example, commenter Minnie the Minx uses the “step up” experience to indicate that men and women sharing household chores is a next stage of human evolution. It also refers to the inequality in the current situation where career women still have to do everything at home.

Moreover, there is a large amount of comments supporting women's rights and independence. For instance, commenter Alex from London uses the negative form of a rhetorical question to indicate that women are no longer relying on men. This indication is clearly understood when we combine it with the specific data comparing incomes and working hours of Alex and her husband to prove the fact that women can be a breadwinner of family in many cases. They have equal capabilities as men do in their career, therefore, Alex denies the excuse other commenters use to force women into accepting the role of a housewife in the family.

(38) alex, london, 1 year ago

You have to laugh at the men on here bleating that women should do it because they (men) have 'worked so hard' at the office being the 'breadwinner'. Except in my case (and many others) I earn about 20% more than my boyfriend, and there is no hope in hell that we could live on just his wage. Oh, and I work about 30% longer hours too, before I even take extra freelance work into account. But sure, yeah, we're all relying on those bread winning men, aren't we ladies?! Men (well, the lazy, sexist, stuck in the 50s ones) are just scared they will lose their cosy lives with their surrogate mummies (wives) who do everything for them if they admit they are no longer superior in the workplace!

Speaking for women, another excuse that the conservative side uses to justify their opinion is also rejected by another commenter named Ken. This commenter refers to social conditioning, which is the sociological process of training individuals in a society to respond in a manner generally approved by the society in general. This problem has been mentioned in the chapter 2.1 of this research. By using the negative assertion type of rhetorical questions, he/she claims that social conditioning is not a permanent social feature but it is a process applied for each generation. Consequently, social conditioning generally, and the fact that women doing houseworks by themselves specifically can be modified, as long as there is a changing factor.

(39) Ken, Essex, 1 year ago

“Centuries of social conditioning”--- Really? So if your correct women are socially conditioned centuries before they are born? It always seems to me that each generation goes through pretty much a similar cycle making pretty much the same mistakes. When I see women clamouring after a man doing the washing up rather holding a powerful well paid position, that will be the day you'll see men holding washing up competitions.

As a reply to the idea that women's role has been assigned by God or nature, commenter Rosie from London decided to reverse the statement and use a rhetorical question to emphasize the beneficiary in that case:

- (40) Rosie, London, United Kingdom, 1 year ago  
 “God had a plan for women that they should be bearers of children and keepers of families. That involves pleasing the husband by ensuring he comes home from work to a clean house and hot food on the table.” No, God had a plan for men that they should be the slaves of women, ensuring that they come home from work to a clean house, well-behaved children and hot food on the table. Funny how a simple reversal of your perspective benefits me instead of you, isn't it?

The purpose of this comment is to indicate that God is an excuse men use to benefit themselves, and their statement is unreliable. Using a reversal question, Rosie also replied to two aforementioned comments:

- (41) Rosie, London, United Kingdom, 1 year ago  
 “Why do housewives expect to be career women?” 1) “Woman” is not synonymous with “housewife” - many women, like me, have never been housewives and have always focused on our careers. 2) Why should they not expect it?

She firstly clarifies that women are not born to be housewives, and then by a rhetorical question, she confirm the right of women to pursuit their career. In another comment, her rhetorical question ironically asserts the obviousness of the fact that men should share houseworks with women because they live together in the same house and both use household items.

- (42) Rosie, London, United Kingdom, 1 year ago  
 “Women want to work, so suddenly housework becomes the man's problem? Get lost!” Oh, I'm sorry. Here I was thinking that men slept in beds, ate off crockery, left rings round the bath and spilled crumbs on the floor just like everyone else? It turns out I'm sadly mistaken. Housework is the woman's problem because the woman is the only one who uses household items or eats. Oh, wait...

#### 6.4.1.3 The flexible types

Being different from the two aforementioned points of view, there is also a belief that we are living in a developed period where chore division is no longer a topic of discussion. Due to the fact that each family has their own situation to deal with, so as long as the couples are happy with their agreement on this issue, equality is not necessary to be mentioned. Therefore, generalization is one of the problems that the article was criticized for, since some commenters even claim that they are men and they do more house works than their spouses.

- (43) Gordon Webster, Dundee, 1 year ago  
 When are you going to grow up and stop playing the victim Ms. Murray? The majority of people have a division of household labour that they are happy with. Try looking outside your own little box.

According to this comment, chore division is apparently a personal issue which each family has its own way to deal with. As long as everyone is satisfied with it, gender roles are not the matter that we need to pay attention to.

Additionally, commenter bobinky in the following comment mentions the good side of being a housewife, which is having time to take care of yourself while still having money to spend.

- (44) bobinky, Leicester, 1 year ago  
 Weve one bank account,we share the money. I set off at 6 this morning and have just got home. My wife was in the garden sunbathing, she made a cuppa and a sandwich. Shell wash my shirts later,do my lunch for tomorrow and at 6 whilst she sleeps Ill leave for work. Then shell do housework and by afternoon be sat in the garden,shes happy,I promised to look after her when we married,I do,she does the same by doing the housework. Yes on paper she may seem downtrodden wife but all you career girls,did you sunbathe this afternoon?Going for coffee with your mate tomorrow,still have money for more shoes and lie in bed till 8? She used to be a suit wearing career girl and just said 'Ive had enough' one day and stopped and shes a damn sight happier.

It is true in his case that his wife is happy because she is not obsessed with keeping her house clean. Even though this statement belongs to the husband which in some cases cannot accurately reflect the wife's opinion, this comment relates to some other comments by the idea of an acceptable agreement between wife and husband. According to these comments, each family has a different situation, therefore their chore division may not be the same. Gender roles and the amount of work do not matter, as long as the couple is happy with their deal. These following comments can be considered as an illustration for this idea:

- (45) sophie, belfast, 1 year ago  
Does it matter as long as people are happy with their chosed lifestyle? Some women have a nesting instinct and seem to want to have a nice tidy home, have kids etc - leave them alone. It is their choice. Some men prefer DIY or gardening or whatever - leave them alone they are happy too. Stop trying to make everyone the same. We are all equal but different.
- (46) LetsBeHonest, Engerrrland, United Kingdom, 1 year ago  
Perhaps they are good at the house work and like a clean house? I agree men should always contribute to the housework and in some cases the men do more. As long as the couple is happy with the current situation I do not see a problem. I do all the general car maintenance like checking air pressure / tyre tread / oil / brake fluid because I do not mind doing it. My partner doesn't mind because I am good at it and she doesn't like doing it. We are both happy.———

Indeed, as a result, many commenters believe that gender roles in housework division are no longer a topic to discuss. Commenter JGM from London states:

- (47) JGM, London, 1 year ago  
I didn't actually realize that in some households the chores are still not equally shared! I have lived with my partner for 5 years and sharing the work is not something we have ever discussed - we've just always done it. Sometimes if I am working long hours he will do the main share and vice versa, that's the way a partnership works. Why is this still up for discussion in 2013!?

In her opinion, equality in chore division means both wife and husband are willing to do everything and to help each other. Her rhetorical question implies that we are living in the advanced age of mankind where everyone has the same responsibility with domestic works. As a consequence of their belief, many criticisms from this group of people have been made, centering on feminism in general and these types of articles in particular.

- (48) Lamberton, Lichfield, 1 year ago  
 Good grief. Just how many times has she churned this `story` out...? Swap a paragraph here and there, alter one or two words and Bingo! yet another man-bashing feature from someone stuck in a mind-warp. It's all rather predictable, tedious and wearisome..... Don't you think...?

#### 6.4.1.4 Conclusion

After analyzing the comments from the British online tabloid, many controversial opinions about household labour division have been portrayed. Some comments agree with the idea of the article, stating that women have the rights to pursue their career and men should do their fair share in houseworks. Nevertheless, some comments are sexist when claiming that the role of women is being housewives. The explanation for that statement is that it is either an instinct of human being assigned by God or by nature. However, there is also a belief that we are living in a developed period where chore division is no longer a topic for discussion. Because each family has their own situation to deal with, so as long as the couples are happy with their agreement on this issue, equality is not necessary to be mentioned. Therefore, generalization is one of the problems that the article was criticized for, since some commenters even claim that they are men and they do more houseworks than their spouses. Meanwhile, some commenters complain about the superiority of women in the career path where they have so many privileges for being a woman, and for that reason, gender equality means no housework for men. Moreover, a lot of comments blame women for spoiling their sons, and consequently pushing the next generation into the old track.

In conclusion, doing a qualitative content analysis to analyze the different perspectives above, we have constructed a complete picture of gender roles in domestic labour division. The result of this analyzing process will be the main material for building cultural models and comparing them with the Vietnamese ones in the next parts of this research.

#### 6.4.2 The Vietnamese case

There are two main opinions in the comment section under the Vietnamese article. The first group presents conservative ideas about the role of men and women in their family by approaching many aspects of the problem. The second one stands on the opposite side which encourages women to fight for their fair share. Both of the two schools of thoughts have stated sufficient reasons to justify their attitude toward the issue.

##### 6.4.2.1 The conservative views

Many comments which are found in the Vietnamese tabloid contain sexist ideas about gender roles in household labour division. Even though commenters adopt distinctive ways to illustrate their opinions, the thought that women are born to do housework is emphasized.

One of the comments that reflect gender roles in family in the most powerful way belongs to commenter Đặng T Hồng Lua. She constructs the symbol of a perfect women by telling a story about her mother who pays for their living and does almost all of the chores in her family.

- (49) Đặng T Hồng Lua · 19h13, ngày 05-12-2013 · TP HCM  
 I have a perfect mother who is the one and only breadwinner of my family. My house is always clean and she cooks delicious meals every day. When I lived with my parents, I did not have to do anything, just washing dishes sometimes but with my mother standing beside to help me wash all of the big pans. In the dinner time, she cooked rice and side dishes beforehand, I just had to warm them up and put vegetables into hot pan so that they can be green. Generally, I am so blissful. I love my mother so much after reading this article 😊

Meanwhile, the commenter herself as a daughter just helps her mother with some simple works occasionally. Other members of her family are not mentioned in her comment, but it can be indicated that her father does not participate in doing chores at all. By praising her mother as a perfect one, it is implied that working women can only

fulfill their duty when they finish their houseworks. Additionally, if we assume that the commenter is a female based on her feminine Vietnamese name, it is interesting to observe how gender inequality has absorbed into women's mind, making them unaware of fair share in domestic works. Consequently, that school of thought leads to the situation where working women are too tired with their overwhelming workload but they still try to deal with it. For instance, commenter *nguyenleha* claims that she would rather have a cleaning service than ask her husband for help. In her opinion, society considers a wife who demands for her husband to do his share in houseworks “a lazy girl”:

- (50) *nguyenleha* · 14h33, ngày 22-10-2013 · Hải Phòng  
 Don't ever expect your husbands to do that; not only will you get no help, but also be considered a lazy girl. You can hire the cleaning service once or several times per week depending on your demand and financial state. It's a win-win situation: you won't be tired and your husband won't get nagged at. Lots of women seem to derive happiness from suffering and to be afraid of being deemed idle... but I'm not such a fool.

Unlike *nguyenleha*, commenter *keo\_ngot\_hihi* decides to keep silence and do all the work by herself even though her income is higher than her husband's:

- (51) *keo\_ngot\_hihi* · 10h25, ngày 23-10-2013 · Hà Nội  
 I have no one to complain to. I am so bored. I am a servant with 8 hours working in the office, have higher salary than my husband's but still have to do housework and taking care of the kids. The earliest time for me to have a shower is at 11PM every day.

Regardless of the tasks women have to cope with and the stress they feel, they try to avoid having their husband do anything at home because it is the social norm that they have to follow. Women are afraid of receiving negative reaction from society if they break the norm which defines the role of each gender. As a reply to *nguyenleha*, commenter Nguyễn Thuỳ Dương dramatically illustrates the way this social norm works:

- (52) Nguyễn Thùy Dương · 15h44, ngày 22-10-2013  
 @nguyenleha: Everyone has their own situation, my friend! Perhaps they have money to hire a house helper but it is still difficult to do that since they live with their in-laws who force them to do everything without helping her or even forbid their son to do that. Will they be willing to let her daughter-in-law hire a house helper? You should think before talking, don't judge others based on your own experience, if you are happy, try to enjoy it. We are all bearing the situation of being a daughter-in-law, if you cannot sympathise for others, don't judge them like: "taking on too much and then complaining about it. Lots of women seem to derive happiness from suffering and to be afraid of being deemed idle... but I'm not such a fool". So ridiculous, my friend!

In fact, the point of Nguyễn Thùy Dương's comment is to argue about the attitude of nguyenleha toward other women's solution to deal with housework because according to her, nguyenleha appears to be ignorant of the reason why they choose to do everything instead of hiring a cleaning service. Nevertheless, by stating that reason, Nguyễn Thùy Dương demonstrates how powerful gender inequality is in Vietnamese society. The pressure that women are enduring comes from their in-laws if they live together. According to this comment, some Vietnamese families not only do not help their daughter-in-law or let their son participate in doing houseworks but they also forbid her to hire a cleaning service. The statement indicates the way men are educated by their family members that houseworks are no other than the wife's responsibility. This sexist idea of labour division based on gender makes women have no choice but fulfil the role by herself, otherwise they are considered as being a bad wife and daughter-in-law.

As a result of the widely accepted gender inequality in Vietnamese society, some sexist jokes about women's role have been found in the comment section. The following conversation among four commenters named rangkingboy, lecture, dang van trang and Minh for example:

- (53) rangkingboy · 21h14, ngày 22-10-2013 · Hà Nội  
 Wife works on housework and husband works on wife is the truth for many generations  
lecture · 22h14, ngày 22-10-2013 · Hà Nội

@rangingboy: True, wives should let their husbands rest for a while because they have to work hard at night 😊 Why do wives want to have everything

dang van trang · 23h39, ngày 22-10-2013 qua điện thoại · Hà Nội

@lecture: are you crazy? After a whole day working and finishing a mountain of housework, no woman can think about that.

Minh · 02h08, ngày 23-10-2013 · Hà Nội

@dang van trang: lecture was right, women complain about doing some housework while men have to work the whole day long and then serve women at night, it is a mental-and-physical-consuming work, wives only lay there enjoying it without any effort so forcing your husbands to do housework makes no sense.

In the above discussion, commenters imply that maintaining the intimate relationship between wife and husband is men's duty and it is the impartial compensation for not doing houseworks. Apparently, this is a sexual joke because in fact, both men and women contribute their efforts and get equal benefit in their relationship. However, because "humor is the perfect medium in which to couch a serious message because any serious intention and any serious meaning can always be denied", commenters in this case have clearly claimed their message that women should accept their role regardless of any reason. (Brunner, 2002)

Moreover, the explanations given by commenters prove the existence of gender inequality, such as financial dependence of women or the "naturally" assigned role. Commenter Gấu con narrated about her circumstance where she accepted the role as a housewife because of her financial problem. Nevertheless, this cannot be considered as a reasonable explanation due to the fact that many career women who earn more than their husband still think that they are born to do housework.

(54) Gấu con · 23h02, ngày 22-10-2013 qua điện thoại · Đà Nẵng  
How similar our situations are, my husband does not help me anything with housework, if I am independent financially like you are, I will definitely live alone with my children, having a useless husband and taking care of the in-laws are too much haizzz

(55) lecture · 09h53, ngày 23-10-2013 · Hà Nội  
The fact is that no wife accepts to do all of the works you listed. There is always a men's contribution so don't symbolize yourselves. In case

you take on too much works, you have to look at yourself again 😊. Girls, do you think switching the role as you wish to do is possible when gender roles are divided from the primitive period? In the past they said that women should be good at both social and domestic works but it is no longer true because now men are also like that. Women have the special irreplaceable natural role and men do everything because they don't have that role. Since the day they were born, men have already confronted gender inequality and had many disadvantages, now if women keep fighting for more rights, maybe in the next century they will not have to do anything but giving birth and breasting their child 😊

In his opinion, nowadays men do contribute to doing chores, but by using a rhetorical question, he clarifies that gender roles are natural instinct which cannot be changed over time. Nature gives women the role of being a mother so they need to take care of the family, and men have to work hard to raise their family because they do not have that role. Although men can help women with housework sometimes, generally it is still the women's task. What commenter lecture claims is not persuasive enough due to the fact that women are both mothers and wage earners now, so men need to do more in order to balance their relationship.

Another case referring to the deep rooted idea that houseworks are the women's job is when women themselves describe the situation in their family:

(56) tran thi thu hang · 10h34, ngày 28-10-2013 · Thừa Thiên Huế  
My husband generally helps me when I ask him to. He does for me whatever job he can without hesitating. Only one thing making me sad is that he eats out with his friend a lot. hicc

By using the word “help”, commenter tran thi thu hang has referred to the fact that it is her main responsibility to do the chores and her husband only plays the assisting role. Similar statement was found in a comment of a male commenter named Novak Djokovic:

(57) Novak Djokovic · 16h40, ngày 23-10-2013 · TP HCM  
Typical Vietnamese men..... only 90% .... I am in the 10% willing to help their wives even though I have not been married yet...

In both of the two aforementioned comments, people are satisfied with the idea that a man who assists the spouse with chores is a good and progressive man. Due to the consequence of patriarchy in the past when men did not do houseworks at all, this kind of thought is understandable, however, in current circumstances where both men and women are wage earners, gender roles in domestic labour division needs to be considered more seriously.

In conclusion, gender inequality has been considered such a powerful social norm in Vietnamese society that it makes women who have a career and do all of the houseworks an ideal woman. By evaluating comments under the Vietnamese tabloid article, we detected many explanations people use to justify this mindset. First of all, it is the education that both men and women received from their family members and society from their early age that leads to the lack of awareness that this is an unfair arrangement. Secondly, it is important to mention the pressure from the in-laws and society that women have to deal with when they break the norm and ask their husband for his fair share. It forces women to follow the rule in spite of their opinion. Moreover, another reason that was pointed out by commenters is the assigned role by nature from the primitive age of human being that cannot be changed regardless of how developed our society is. Although the fact that women can have their own career is accepted even in the most conservative comment, Vietnamese women are still suffering from the burden of domestic gender inequality and being treated unfairly by their family members.

#### 6.4.2.2 Commenters who support gender equality

In contrast to the conservative school of thought about the role of women in family, there are a lot of commenters who stand on the side of gender equality. They identify the inconsistent issues in the sexist comments and impugn the traditional point of view.

First of all, corresponding to the ideal symbol of women that was demonstrated by conservative commenters in the previous part of this research, user *hải yến* questions the

definition of a perfect man in a family. In her opinion, if a husband wants his wife to be perfect, he himself has to fulfill his role which is supporting his family as well as participating in doing houseworks.

- (58) hải yến · 22h36, ngày 22-10-2013 · Hà Nội  
 Why didn't you ask him like: So can you fulfill your responsibilities as a husband like a real man? How can you support your own family when you cannot even support yourself and still expect to be waited on hand and foot? Real man my ass. To tell the truth, no women get divorced just because of household chores; however, such kind of husbands who do nothing are just so cruel, selfish, and superficial that they become unworthy to be respected and loved. If the man is the deserved one, it is actually the wife's joy to take care of him.

In order to emphasize her idea, she uses two rhetorical questions to point out the absurdity of the husband in the Vietnamese tabloid article. For this commenter, it is unacceptable for a man to demand of his wife to reach a high standard while he is incapable of satisfying his family with minimum needs. Accordingly, the ideal marriage is a two-way-relationship in which both wife and husband contribute their effort to share all kinds of burdens. Only responsible men who do their fair share deserve women's exertion.

Moreover, as a reply to the idea that each person is born with their gender roles assigned by nature, commenter hoang phuong anh illustrates her point with an example of a single father who was able to do all kinds of houseworks:

- (59) hoang phuong anh · 12h46, ngày 23-10-2013 · TP HCM  
 @lecture: By the ways, about the gender division, there is no reason for it, it is just sophistication. If there is no woman, men can do everything, just because you have us so you depend on us 😊 Cooking, cleaning, taking care of children. Single fathers can do all of those jobs. It proves that they are capable of doing everything 😊 Wives and husbands are better sharing the jobs and help each other. If they are not willing to help, divorce and being single is better.

From this point of view, men are using unsatisfactory excuses in order to avoid doing housework and as a result, women will do it for them. Once again, gender equality is

accentuated and this commenter also gives women an advice to divorce a husband who does not share the workload with his spouse.

Nevertheless, not all women are determined enough to face their circumstance. According to commenter jnpbcne, women living with a lot of fears will be taken advantage of by their husband and in-laws. The metaphor comparing woman to a buffalo originates from the Vietnamese agricultural tradition of using water buffalos to cultivate the fields because of their characteristics which are strong, hardworking, and easy to be controlled.

(60) jnpbcne · 16h41, ngày 22-10-2013 · TP HCM

@Nguyễn Thùy Dương: If you want to be a buffalo, stop complaining, you don't know how to love yourself so don't blame anyone, no one can sympathize with that. What is it all about living with your in-law? If you live with your in-laws, do you have to allow them to make you a buffalo and pull you to anywhere they want?

In case you cannot live together with your in-law, live separately, if your husband is feckless, divorce him, if you cannot divorce him, being afraid of loneliness, of living alone, of the fact that your children will not have a father then let it be and be a buffalo for the rest of your life!

Jnpbcne uses rhetorical questions to assert the fact that living with the in-laws does not affect the way women being treated but it is their fault to not have courage to speak for their rights. Vietnamese women are affected by the fear of losing face if they divorce their husbands because divorcing proves their failure in life. Additionally, women worry about the mental development of their children in case they have to grow up without the care of one of their parents. Only by being strong and by overcoming those fears will women obtain their rights and be treated equally to men.

Additionally, in both of the article and the comment sections, the relationship between women and their in-laws has been repeatedly accentuated as one of the most considerable pressures that force women into suffering gender inequality. Many commenters who support gender equality have expressed their attitude toward this issue

and recommended the solution that women deal with their situation. For example, commenter groschat states that:

- (61) groschat · 02h16, ngày 23-10-2013 · Nước ngoài  
 Like a donkey loves carrying heavy package, thinking that being a free of charge servant can make you be loved by your in-laws, but the result you get is to be considered a real donkey by your husband and your in-laws. Is that worth it, my sisters ?! I haven't gotten married but as I see how my mother does all the work and my father just plays around, seriously I cannot bear it, I would rather live alone, serving myself for good :D, Frankly, nowadays men are useless. Just have a baby then divorce your husband :v

Using a Vietnamese folk idiom: “a donkey loves carrying heavy package” which refers to a stubborn person who refuses to take advice from others and learns a lesson the hard way, this comment emphasizes the fact that even if women avoid expressing their weakness and try the best to serve their husband and in-laws, what they receive in the end will only be inappreciation. The rhetorical question commenter groschat uses affirms that fact by accentuating the unworthy effort that women devote for their in-laws. In contrast to the ideal women portrayed in the previous part of this research (see example 49), by telling a story about her family, this commenter illustrates the image of a woman who does everything as an inadequate symbol.

Commenter hong loan once again repeats the idea that women need to speak for themselves to avoid being bullied by their in-laws because according to this user, they do not consider daughter-in-law as a member of their family:

- (62) hong loan · 08h50, ngày 23-10-2013 · TP HCM  
 @Nguyễn Thùy Dương: Do you think that you would be happy when you do whatever your in-laws say to please them? Women have to help themselves rather than hoping for the help of anyone else, your in-laws are strangers to you at the end of the day.

Discussing about the solution to deal with doing chores when living together with the in-laws, commenter Chulinhanh asserts the importance of adopting resistant methods in order to avoid the dependence of the in-laws on women:

- (63) Chulinhanh · 02h44, ngày 23-10-2013 · Nước ngoài  
 You always have to say that: I am tired, I have low blood pressure, or I have problems with my bones, etc,. If they don't ask about your health then you have to say it yourself, your working schedule as well (remember to plus 2 hours for traffic jam). If you act like you are strong, the work load will be added to be suitable to your strength. You just have to take care of your children, housework can wait to be done latter, or if it is not finished, it doesn't matter. In case you come home late? Your in-laws are starving then they will cook by themselves or buy some food to eat, if your mother-in-law feels pity for her son being hungry after work because his wife said that she would come back late from work, then she will cook for him. If they are not handicaps, do not do anything for them, but you can be resented a little bit. You will pass away if you try to satisfy your in-laws, but remember to keep smiling and be polite to them ☺

By claiming that, Chulinhanh indicates the reason some women suffer from their in-laws is because they let other family members rely on them too much, which creates a bad habit that is difficult to be changed and makes the situation worse.

On the other hand, beside the comments criticizing domestic gender inequality, there is also the idea that Vietnamese society has developed and has mainly achieved the fair share of workload between men and women. One instance comes from the rhetorical questions of commenter Hai yen, who emphasizes the developed age we are living in and the infrequent existence of men with a gender inequality mindset:

- (64) Hai yen · 21h37, ngày 22-10-2013 qua điện thoại · Hà Nội  
 Just divorce! In which century are we now? Why do we still have that kind of men here?

Another example is moc\_lan's comment, which narrated the story of a family where the father does all the housework and is a breadwinner as well. Based on this statement, equality means whoever works more time in office will do less at home regardless of their gender.

- (65) moc\_lan · 15h36, ngày 24-10-2013 · TP HCM  
 I don't know, if I meet a man like that, I think I will divorce him for real. In my house, if my mother is tired after work, my father will do everything while my mother watches drama. After cooking my father has to call us many times, until the drama is finished only do we come to the dinning table :D. My father also

works (he is the breadwinner but always has to ask my mother for money because he gives her everything he earns), but he has more free time than my mother, so he takes care of the housework. I just want to show off my father :D

#### 6.4.2.3 Conclusion

In conclusion, people supporting gender equality discuss about the essence of a relationship in which both men and women have the same responsibility. In this modern world, men are the only wage earner, so they cannot expect women to do all of the houseworks. In spite of some comments stating that gender inequality is no longer a problem because our society is developed enough to achieve fair labour distribution, other commenters still consider it an issue for which we need to find a solution. The reason they stated for the existence of inequality is mainly because Vietnamese women do not have the courage to speak and fight for their rights. They are afraid of displeasing their in-laws by ruining their expectations, and losing face if other people know that their family is not happy. As a result, their husband and in-laws build a habit of depending on them and take their effort for granted. The advice for women in this circumstance is to avoid doing everything and accept divorcing if they have no other choice.

#### 6.5 Case comparison

After analyzing the material, we have reconstructed the different perspectives on gender roles in household labour division and the self-categorizations of commenters in each case. With the purpose of comparing the two distinctive cultures, this part of the research utilizes the emic approach, which according to Brislin in his book written in 1976, is an analysis concentrating on the behavior of each social group, especially what they consider to be important and meaningful. In other words, it means that we will compare our previous analyses of both cases in order to highlight their similarities and differences. Based on the previous sections, there are also two main issues that will be

discussed in this part, namely the perspective on gender roles in household labour division, and the self-categorizations of commenters.

Apparently, there are many similarities and differences in the way people in two distinctive cultures perceive old and familiar issues which are marriage in general and gender roles in household labour division in particular. Moreover, what makes cross-cultural comparisons interesting is that you can detect diversities. In our case, those subjects are perspectives and opinions. Therefore, not only do we distinguish the similarities and differences between Vietnamese and British perspectives, we also take a closer look into the way they resemble or contradict each other.

#### 6.5.1 The conservative point of view

First of all, considering similar concepts among the conservative opinions, we have detected that Vietnamese and British commenters both use the explanation that women doing housework is the assigned role. This statement comes from commenters whose purpose is to protect the superior position of the husband in the family. By blaming gender inequality on supernatural influences that human cannot control, they try to emphasize the undeniable role that each gender has and persuade women to give up fighting for their rights. Even though commenters of both cases have the same strategy to achieve their purpose, there is still a difference that distinguishes them from each other. In the British case, the image of God has been used broadly while in the Vietnamese case, it is replaced by the power of nature and instinct. This fact indicates which feature is valued the most in each society. It is quite easy to understand because Vietnam is a communist country where the majority of people are atheistic. This is the circumstance where the belief of majority of people has been taken advantage of in order to defend the benefit of a specific group.

Besides, in both the British and the Vietnamese cases, the fact that young boys are spoiled by their mothers is also implied as one of the most important conservative concepts. According to these comments, women are the one who push themselves into

gender inequality when they avoid teaching their sons to know how to deal with housework. Actually, educating children is not only the responsibility of mothers, but it is also the problem of fathers and the whole society. If the way mothers create gender inequality by dividing different workloads between their daughters and sons was disapproved by their husbands and the social norm, the habit would never be developed. The impact of this habit on the next generation is so undeniable that people in both societies are aware of it. While some people use it as a shield to protect them from being criticized for taking pleasure from their superior position in the family, for others, it is a motivation for further revolution because after recognizing it as a factor contributing to the existence of gender inequality, they can find a way to eliminate it. Consequently, this is a matter that commenters in both tabloids taken into consideration in a similar way.

For further discussion on the explanation for their conservative point of view, commenters in British tabloid have come up with three more excuses to defend their opinion. These explanations cannot be found in Vietnamese case.

The first explanation is that being a woman creates many advantages in a professional career, wives must do housework to compensate for all the unfairness men have to suffer from. It is interesting to see such a statement because regardless of its reliability, it emphasizes the difference between the two societies. While Vietnamese commenters do not mention this problem at all, chance is that it does not even exist in their observation and mentioning it just makes their comments become unreliable. On the other hand, even if this is not true for the rest of the society, it does appear to be true for some British commenters, therefore, they decide to use it as an excuse for their role in family.

The second explanation is that women have a fetish of cleaning or higher standards of tidiness than men do, so men do not have the responsibility for women doing a lot of housework, but it is the women's choice. In fact, men are better in suffering from untidiness because when the place is messy, both men and women can recognize it. However, women are so aware of the dependence of men on them that they think if they

do not clean it, nobody will. Furthermore, this statement implies that if women do not clean, men will do it but with lower standards. British women appear to have a choice, either they do it or suffer from the low quality of men's work.

The third explanation distinguishing the conservative British comments and the conservative Vietnamese ones is that women are greedy for desiring to take both domestic and social roles. By claiming that, the conservative side has affirmed the role of the woman as a housewife, and their role in the public domain is just an additional one. Actually, the purpose of this comment is either forcing women to give up on their career or convincing them to do the best in both roles due to the fact that it is their fault for desiring too much. There is no similar comment in the Vietnamese tabloid, which demonstrates the chance that the Vietnamese conservative side does not consider women having their own career is a bad idea. Even though they have the same expectation that women should put their efforts into fulfilling their two roles, Vietnamese men do not oppose women having career and supporting their family in terms of finance.

Meanwhile, there is also an important factors existing in the Vietnamese comment section that is not mentioned in the British case. It cannot be found in British tabloid any comment claiming that they are tired of the overwhelming workload but they still try to deal with it. The reason explaining for this fact is that Vietnam is a society where an individual has a strong connection to people living around him or her. From the side of women, British commenters often try to compromise with their partner because women in the western world do not have a close relationship with their in-laws and they do not worry about receiving negative social reaction. Growing up in the society that has a lot of norms and judgements makes women think that gender inequality is acceptable and they will be criticized if they cannot complete what people expect them to do. Moreover, Vietnamese wives usually live with their in-laws so the situation is much more complicated than it is in the British case. The stress of building an image of a perfect woman in the eyes of other people forces Vietnamese women to deal with housework alone by themselves.

### 6.5.2 Commenters who support gender equality

The ideas in the comments of gender equality supporters in both of the British and the Vietnamese tabloids are quite similar. Commenters use the same strategy of casting a doubt on the excuses that the conservative side utilizes to defend their opinion. The purpose of this strategy is to corroborate the importance and the needs of gender equality in family. Moreover, they give advice and share their experiences with women who suffer from unfairness with the desire of establishing a better domestic environment.

In order to cast a doubt on excuses men use in conservative comments, innovative commenters in both Vietnamese and British tabloids use many examples and arguments to justify their point of view. First of all, the fact that women are and can be a breadwinner of a family has been asserted by many commenters' stories. According to these commenters, women are not born to do housework because they are capable of doing everything that men can do, and furthermore, there are a lot of cases which prove that single fathers have abilities to deal with cooking and cleaning in a perfect way. Both of the Vietnamese and the British innovative sides criticize conservative comments for taking advantages of religion and even human revolution process, making them a shield to protect their superior position in the family.

On the other hand, innovative commenters in Vietnamese and British tabloids also raise the same issues that they consider to be important regarding gender equality. British commenters label it "social conditioning" while Vietnamese people describe it without any specific name. For example, Vietnamese commenters concentrate on the fears of women of having a bad reputation. This bad image includes marital failure, being a mother who does not consider the healthy mental development of her children or being a daughter-in-law who does not fulfill standard requirements. In other words, women live with their purpose of satisfying the demand of other people. According to innovative commenters, because this idea is now deeply rooted in Vietnamese women's minds, it has been taken advantages of to force them to be totally responsible for not only household chores but also the development of their child and the relationship between them and their in-laws as well. The advice given to them is that they should

have confidence and courage to speak for their rights and overcome their fears by paying less attention to conservative social norms. The factors described above by Vietnamese commenters basically are social conditioning done by the Vietnamese system. In the meantime, British users do not give any specific advice to renounce the concept, however, they try to define it as a process applied for each generation, not a permanent social feature, which means it can be changed in order to adapt to the new situation. Therefore, it cannot be used as an explanation for gender inequality. Consequently, despite the different approaches of commenters of two tabloids to defend their opinion, it can be seen as they have the same concerns about how social standards affect women's mindsets.

### 6.5.3 The self-categorization of commenters and their benefits

Based on the self-categorization of anonymous commenters in both Vietnamese and British tabloids, we have observed the existing attitudes each category has toward gender roles in marriage and their explanations for their point of view. Basically, regardless of the culture of commenters, there is a close connection between the category each individual allocates him or herself to and the purpose of their argumentation. However, Vietnamese and British commenters have different methods of expression to protect their position in the family. The types of categories they have, alongside with the attitude attached to each category are also slightly different. Moreover, their definitions of an ideal partner and a perfect family are also diverse.

First of all, despite which tabloid commenters belong to, they all choose for themselves a specific category and use their statements to preserve what they consider to be the rights that category deserves. The categories in both cases are quite similar to each other, namely wife or mother, husband or father, daughter, and in one case, the brother. The only difference between them is that the Vietnamese has the category of daughter-in-law while British commenters do not.

Particularly, commenters in the category of women as a wife or a mother in both cases often have an innovative point of view on gender equality because they are the one who suffers the most from old social standards for women. By categorizing themselves as a women living in a modern world, commenters refer to the domestic and social duties they have to deal with in everyday life. The conflict between men and women becomes intensive because women have been participating in the labor force while the majority of men still refuse to share housework with their partners. The stories of the experienced commenters indicate that the expectation of commenters who categorize themselves as wives does not necessarily rely on the definition of fair share in housework, but it largely depends on the mental satisfaction.

On the other hand, the members of the category of men as a husband or a father hold conservative opinions because they do not want their superior position in the family to be affected. Even though there are many stories that were told by women about their partners who are responsible and willing to do housework, most of the male commenters in both cases do not agree with that idea. Despite the fact that the Western world is considered to be more innovative because it is the place where feminism has been created and developed, Vietnamese and British male commenters basically use the same strategy of denying women's achievements and emphasizing the constant of traditional gender roles in order to protect their advantages at home.

Additionally, the members of the category of daughter are complex in terms of their perception of perfect parents. In both Vietnamese and British tabloids, there are two important issues in this category that we need to consider. The first one is how these daughters evaluate household labor division between their parents and the second one is their opinion of the method of domestic education they receive compared to their siblings of different genders. While the British "daughter category" consistently supports the idea of housework being shared by their parents, one Vietnamese commenter appreciates the case where one of their parents does almost all of the jobs. This can be explained by the traditional Vietnamese social norm of praising people who sacrifice themselves for other in order to encourage people to live for others, not for themselves. Furthermore, commenters allocating themselves as daughters in the

Vietnamese and the British tabloids are often the victims of gender inequality and they blame their parents, especially the mother for contributing to the continuation of unfair labor division.

The last category of commenters is the daughter-in-law, which only appears in the Vietnamese case. Because of the close relationship between women and their in-laws in Vietnam and its impact on domestic gender equality, many commenters have shared their experiences and opinions on this problem. The attitude of these commenters toward their family-in-law is not positive due to the high requirements their mothers-in-law expect from them and the lack of understanding between both sides. Even though they live under the same roof, daughters-in-law and their husband's families are often not getting along well. The mother-in-law in some cases not only forbids her son to help his wife but also prevents her from hiring a house helper. The proper explanations for this problem are not only the traditional expectations people have for their daughter-in-law, which is not applicable anymore due to the fact that women are no longer stay-at-home-housewives, but also the deep rooted prejudice about the relationship itself that keeps both sides from attempting to understand each other.

Moreover, there are also cases which only happen in comments of the Vietnamese tabloid when commenters adopt more than one category for themselves. Because Vietnamese have a strong connection to other people, it causes a dilemma when they consider the benefit of themselves and of the people they care for. However, based on their final statement, we can still see which the most valuable benefit that these commenters treasure is.

## 7 CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this research has been to evaluate the differences and similarities between two distinct cultures. Materials were collected in the comment section under two articles of two popular online tabloids in Vietnam and the United Kingdom, which are [www.afamily.vn](http://www.afamily.vn) and [www.dailymail.co.uk](http://www.dailymail.co.uk). Both of these articles discuss household labor division based on gender.

Specifically, we first focused on the self-categorization of commenters as we divide them into two types: the serious contributors and the non-serious contributors due to the content and motivation of their comments. By analyzing the motivation of each type and the benefits that they try to protect, the category that commenters allocate themselves in was clarified. After that, these categories of each case were compared to each other using a comparative method (Brislin 1976) in order to demonstrate how the ways people in two distinct cultures see themselves resemble one another.

Secondly, we analyzed the perceptions that commenters of each case have on gender roles in household labor division. Using discourse analysis (Paul Gee 2008) and qualitative content analysis (Mayring 2000), each comment was evaluated to demonstrate commenter's opinion on what they consider to be a fair share in housework. Basically, three types of perceptions could be discussed, which are the conservative, the innovative, and the flexible point of views. Using an emic approach, the comparison between Vietnamese and British tabloids has been conducted to demonstrate the similarities and differences in their perceptions.

After the process of evaluating and comparing the data from both of sources, the result shows that even though the United Kingdom is one of the leaders in feminism, the majority of commenters who categorize themselves as husband or father still hold a conservative attitude toward gender equality in domestic labor division. The situation is the same in the Vietnamese case. Meanwhile, in both cases, commenters who have innovative perspectives are mostly women. However, the British case differs from the other by the existence of a flexible perspective which emphasizes the importance of the

compromise between partners. In addition, Vietnamese commenters pay more attention to the relationship between women and their family-in-law while British people do not.

Consequently, in the scope of this research where participators are people who post comments in online tabloids, regardless of culture diversity, the majority of men feel the needs of preserving their benefits and advantages when they think their position is threatened. However, if they satisfy their wife's requirement of being respected and appreciated, the tension of the conflict between men and women will be reduced dramatically. It is interesting to see how two distinct cultures resemble each other in one way and then differ in another one. It is desired that this study will inspire and facilitate further researches in gender roles in marriage and gender equality in domestic labor division.

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## APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Article from [www.dailymail.co.uk](http://www.dailymail.co.uk)

Why do career women STILL think they're born to do housework?

Women enjoy greater equality at work and changes in social attitudes

But they do at least two-thirds of the housework

By JENNI MURRAY

PUBLISHED: 00:19 GMT, 25 July 2013 | UPDATED: 08:07 GMT, 25 July 2013

Our household routine always worked well. My mother rushed home with the groceries she'd bought after a busy day at work to cook a lovely two-course meal every evening.

When I arrived home from school, I did my bit by tidying, dusting, building a fire and setting the table. After our meal, my mother and I cleared away and washed up.

My father, by contrast, arrived home from work, appreciatively ate the meal, then retired to a chair to put up his feet and read the paper.

Housewives at heart? Women do at least two-thirds of the housework, even when they are the main breadwinner

Housewives at heart? Women do at least two-thirds of the housework, even when they are the main breadwinner

This was our routine, day after day, until one afternoon I snapped.

'Dad, we've all been out all day, but you've done nothing but eat and sit down since you got home,' I said. 'Why don't you clear the table, wash up and let Mum sit down?'

My father was shocked and apologetic. 'Oh, I'm sorry, love. I didn't think. I don't mind helping.'

'No, Dad,' I insisted, as only a stroppy 15-year-old could. 'It's not about helping. It's a question of doing your share!'

I feel obliged to point out my father was one of the nicest, most decent men. But having been born in 1926 when men didn't do housework, his belief that a domesticated man was somehow unmanly was firmly entrenched.

That was nearly half a century ago. How infuriating, then, to find that the culture in which my father was raised endures to this day, with the Economic and Social Research

Council reporting this week that women do at least two-thirds of the housework, even when they are the main breadwinner.

Research shows, despite greater equality at work and changes to social attitudes, the division of chores has not kept pace.

Unequal division of labour: Jenni Murray thinks that this state of affairs must change

Unequal division of labour: Jenni Murray thinks that this state of affairs must change

How on earth have we managed to give girls equal access to education and employment, yet failed to ensure our boys do their bit with the iron and vacuum cleaner?

And why should career women feel they should come home after a long day's work and don a pinny, too?

I was raised in an immaculate house in Barnsley, South Yorkshire. My mother was a civil servant until she married in 1949 and had to leave her job: in the post-war years it was thought wrong for woman 'with a husband to keep her' to take a job that could be done by a man.

My parents fell into the traditional pattern — stay-at-home wife and mother, breadwinner husband and father — until I encouraged my mother to go back to work at 39.

She was bored out of her considerable brain and, once I'd assured her no one would think her working meant Dad couldn't afford to keep her, she got a receptionist's job at the town hall, and she loved it.

But my electrical engineer father never understood the notion of doing his share of the housework.

The division of labour in the home has played a big role in my relationship with my partner David.

'How on earth have we managed to give girls equal access to education and employment, yet failed to ensure our boys do their bit with the iron and vacuum cleaner?'

He was an electronic engineer and former naval officer and I was a BBC broadcaster when we had our two sons, now 26 and 30. After a couple of hopeless nannies, David decided they needed a parent at home and doubted it would be me as I enjoyed my job so much.

As one of the first men to become a house husband, he found it very difficult, such was the social opprobrium surrounding the role.

His social life disappeared. Friends were always at work and he failed to mingle with the mothers at the school gates. In those days, no one would have invited a lone man to socialise.

I always had a weekly cleaner to make sure the house was 'bottomed', but as well as taking on most parental responsibilities, David also took on the lion's share of all the domestic chores.

For my mother, to be described as house-proud was her equivalent of a First Class honours degree.

It is a difficult idea to erase.

One moment that delighted me about Him Indoors in the early days was when I was rushing to get to work and he ironed a shirt for me. But, pleased as I was, I could hear my mother saying: 'That's not right. He can't have done it properly.'

Breadwinner mother: Jenni Murray, pictured with her two month old baby Charles, worked while her 'house husband' looked after the children

Breadwinner mother: Jenni Murray, pictured with her two month old baby Charles, worked while her 'house husband' looked after the children

For the most part, I'm not burdened with hackneyed ideas about gender roles that seem to persist in career women who don't relinquish any household chores.

The nub of the problem is social conditioning over many centuries, which has forced women to accept domestic servitude as their lot.

Before my mother came to visit, I used to go around making sure there was not a speck of dust to be found. She'd have thought me a 'slut' if she'd found anything amiss.

My mother was proud of my job as a broadcaster, but found it extremely strange my partner had opted to care for the children. This is what we have had to shake off.

I have tried my best with my sons, who have grown up to be extremely competent cooks.

It never ceased to surprise me, though, that when their teenage friends came round, my sons were the only ones who knew how to fill the dishwasher and that muddy boots should be left at the door.

My prediction that most of those other boys would make a rod for some poor woman's back turns out, sadly, to have been quite accurate.

Housework and childcare are not women's work. It is a question of everyone doing their share.

There's a line in *The Women's Room* by Marilyn French where women discuss work and home life. One says: 'Strange, isn't it, that every discussion about feminism ends up with who does the dishes.'

French wrote those words in the Seventies. It's time we moved on.

Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-2377272/Career-women-versus-housework-Why-professionals-think-theyre-born-housewives.html#ixzz3nhGrsuBY>

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Appendix 2. Article from [www.afamily.vn](http://www.afamily.vn)

“Cô không biết làm đàn bà à?”

22-10-2013 14:03:06

Chị cần nhắn thì anh xẵng giọng: “Vài cái việc cón con như nấu cơm, lau nhà, dọn dẹp mà cũng tị nạnh với chồng! Cô không biết làm đàn bà à?”. Vì em là đàn bà? Đàn bà tốt, lên giường cũng phải hy sinh. Đàn bà đại Chị vừa dứt lời thì nhận được một cái tát như trời giáng. Anh gằn từng tiếng: “Nấu cơm, rửa bát, dọn nhà, có thể mà cũng so bì, ganh đua với chồng!”.

Bình thường đi làm về, chị Thương (Đống Đa, HN) chỉ còn khoảng thời gian khoảng 4 tiếng để làm tất cả mọi việc: cơm nước, dọn dẹp, lau nhà, giặt quần áo, chăm con, tắm rửa vệ sinh cá nhân và các nhu cầu giải trí của bản thân. Đó là còn chưa nói tới chuyện “vợ chồng”.

Việc nhà bao giờ chị cũng phải ưu tiên làm xong trước hết, sau đó mới nghĩ đến việc khác. Mà thường thì khi làm xong đồng việc không tên đó, người chị cũng đã rã rời, lên giường đặt lưng là ngủ được ngay. Ngày hôm sau lại lặp lại chu trình y như vậy.

Nếu chị cứ im lặng, quần quật làm không một lời kêu ca oán thán thì không khí gia đình lúc nào cũng vui vẻ, chồng chị - anh Duy rất hài lòng. Nhưng sức lực chị có hạn, chị cũng có nhu cầu được nghỉ ngơi, được giải trí cho bản thân chứ!

Đôi lần, chị có tâm sự với chồng, ngỡ ý muốn chồng giúp đỡ việc nhà thì anh đánh phủ đầu luôn: “Không được so bì với chồng!”. Cứ nhìn cảnh những gia đình vợ chồng cùng làm việc nhà với nhau vui vẻ mà chị tủi thân ghê gớm. Đối với chị, đó là một điều quá mức xa xỉ.

Anh Duy chả chịu mớ tay vào giúp vợ việc gì nhưng khổ nỗi anh lại thích ăn ngon, thích nhà sạch đẹp, thích con ngoan ngoãn, thích vợ thơm tho, ngọt ngào... cái gì anh cũng thích. Và nếu chị không làm được thì anh chê bai, dè bieu: “Có mỗi thế mà làm không xong! Không mở mắt ra mà nhìn vợ thằng Thắng kia kìa!”.

Anh so sánh thật là khập khiễng, nếu như chị cũng ở nhà nội trợ như vợ anh Thắng ấy thì nói làm gì. Đàng này, chị độc lập về kinh tế, có thể tự lo cho cuộc sống của 2 mẹ con tương đối đầy đủ. Lương của anh, anh nói để tiết kiệm nhưng với mức độ tiêu pha của anh thì lấy đâu ra tiết kiệm.

Mà sức khỏe của chị cũng không được tốt, chị lại có tiền sử gãy chân cách đây hơn một năm nên đứng lâu là đau nhức chân. Thỉnh thoảng chị có nói với chồng về tình trạng sức khỏe, mong chồng hiểu nhưng anh chỉ nhướn mày mĩa mai: “Em làm nhiều quá nhỉ!”.

Tức giận vì lời nói quá mức vô tâm của chồng, chị cũng lớn tiếng: “Em lấy chồng là để làm vợ chứ không phải làm ôsin!”.

Chị vừa dứt lời thì nhận được một cái tát như trời giáng. Anh gằn từng tiếng: “Nấu cơm, rửa bát, dọn nhà, có thể mà cũng so bì, ganh đua với chồng! Cô không biết làm đàn bà à? Không làm được thì nói một câu, đây người làm được nhé! Tôi nói cho cô biết, đàn ông 10 người thì 9 người không làm việc nhà đấy. Ly hôn vì lý do này thì tốt nhất cô ở vậy đừng có lấy chồng nữa cho xong!”.

Đúng là hiếm ai ly hôn chồng vì chồng không chia sẻ việc nhà. Nhưng cứ thế này chị sẽ càng ngày càng héo hon và gầy mòn. Mấy năm trong cuộc hôn nhân là từng ấy năm chị loanh quanh tìm lối thoát mà vẫn bế tắc ...

“Cô không biết làm đàn bà à?” 1

Thỉnh thoảng chị có nói với chồng về tình trạng sức khỏe, mong chồng hiểu nhưng anh chỉ nhướn mày mĩa mai: “Em làm nhiều quá nhỉ!” (Ảnh minh họa).

Ngày chị Hạnh (Ngô Quyên, Hải Phòng) về làm dâu, mẹ chồng sung sướng và hả hê “sang tên” toàn bộ việc nhà cho chị, còn bà làm người chỉ huy. Chẳng biết bao năm qua bà thực hiện có tốt không nhưng bây giờ yêu cầu với con dâu thì cao chót vót.

Cơm nước xong, anh Kiềm - chồng chị thường nhảy lên phòng ôm máy tính, mẹ chồng thì tung tẩy đi buôn dưa lê, chị Hạnh phải quay cuồng với mớ việc được giao. Đến khi mẹ chồng về, thấy chỗ nào còn hạt bụi là kéo tay chị tới tận nơi chỉ trỏ, phê bình.

Khi chưa có bé thì chị Hạnh còn miễn cưỡng làm được theo ý bà, nhưng sau khi sinh con đầu lòng, khối lượng công việc dồn lên vai chị tăng gấp mấy lần. Ngày nào cũng thế, cả ngày trên công ty về, chị cũng chỉ còn vài tiếng ở nhà, thế mà nào là nấu cơm, dọn rửa bát, lau 2 tầng nhà gồm 3 phòng ngủ, 1 phòng khách, 1 bếp, tắm và cho con ăn, dỗ con ngủ.

Theo lời chồng và mẹ chồng thì từng ấy việc có đáng gì, nhưng làm xong cũng đủ khiến chị hụt hơi, có hôm chị còn không có đủ thời gian vệ sinh cá nhân chứ đừng nói là nghỉ ngơi, thư giãn. Hôm nào vợ chồng em chồng sang ăn cơm nữa thì hôm đó đúng là hãi hùng với chị, một mình dọn cả bãi chiến trường, chẳng có ai phụ giúp.

Chị thấy chồng mình chẳng thương vợ, mẹ chồng cũng chẳng coi chị là con dâu, mà mọi người trong nhà này hình như coi chị là ôsin không công thì đúng hơn. Mà ôsin thời nay khéo còn chảnh chọe hơn chị nhiều. Có cô giúp việc nhà chị đồng nghiệp, lau nhà xong, chị ấy nhờ rửa xe, cô ta bốp luôn: “Không, lau nhà xong mệt lắm!”. Vậy là chị ấy phải xuống nước: “Vậy mai rửa cho chị nhé!”. Còn chị, có bao giờ dám nói với chồng và mẹ chồng thế đâu!

Chị chưa dám ý kiến ra mặt với mẹ chồng nhưng đã thủ thỉ tâm sự với anh Kiềm. Nhưng anh lại tỏ vẻ đó là chuyện gì đáng kinh ngạc lắm: “Đó là nghĩa vụ của một người vợ, người con dâu. Mẹ anh cũng làm bao nhiêu năm này có kêu ca gì đâu. Em mới làm được tí tẹo đã kêu như vạc là sao?”.

Thật lòng chị Hạnh chẳng muốn tị nạnh, so bì việc nhà như vậy. Chị chỉ cần sự chia sẻ và giúp đỡ, dù là ít ỏi thôi cũng được, đủ để cho thấy chồng quan tâm và thương chị. Nhưng trong khi chị hết hơi với những thứ việc ở nhà sau giờ làm thì anh ngồi khểnh đọc báo, xem ti-vi, chán chê lại lướt web chứ nhất định không chịu phơi hộ chị chậu quần áo. Theo anh, đó là việc của đàn bà!

Chị cần nhằn thì anh xẵng giọng: “Vài cái việc còn con như nấu cơm, lau nhà, dọn dẹp mà cũng tị nạnh với chồng! Cô không biết làm đàn bà à?”. Chị chán chồng toàn tập. Còn mẹ chồng thì ngày ngày ca bài: “Phụ nữ phải vừa đảm việc nước lại phải giỏi việc nhà, thế mới là người phụ nữ giỏi giang! Chứ cậy đi làm kiếm ra tiền mà ra oai, không chịu làm việc nhà thì cũng là hạng vút đi!”.

Có một đợt, do công việc nên chị thường xuyên về nhà muộn. Thế mà cả nhà đưa chị vào tầm ngắm. Mẹ chồng thì quy cho chị tội vô trách nhiệm. Em chồng thì dè bủ: “Đúng là dâu Tây!”. Còn chồng thì hằm hằm, không hài lòng ra mặt: “Làm gì thì cũng phải cố gắng mà về sớm chứ! Em quên mình đang đi làm dâu à? Không làm được gì cho nhà chồng rồi, đến mấy cái việc chăm chồng, phụng dưỡng mẹ chồng cũng định trốn à?”.

Sao chẳng ai hỏi han chị một câu: “Em có mệt không?”, “Con ăn gì chưa? Công việc bận lắm à?”. Ai cũng chăm chăm trách móc và hậm hực vì chị không về sớm phục vụ họ. Nghĩ đến điều đó mà chị tủi thân phát khóc.

Bao phen chị nghĩ đến phương án ôm con ra ngoài sống. Nhưng nếu vì thế mà ly hôn thì cũng ngớ ngẩn thật. Vì nhìn bề ngoài thì anh Kiêm cũng chẳng có gì quá đáng để phải chê trách. Có kể ra mọi người lại bảo chồng tốt thế còn muốn gì nữa. Vậy là chị lại im lặng chịu đựng, thôi thì vì con...

### Appendix 3. Translation of Vietnamese article

“Don’t you know how to be a woman?”

As she starts to complain, he shouts at her: “You envy your husband for such the trifles like cooking or cleaning! Don’t you know how to be a woman?”

Due to her daily routine, after being off from work, Thuong, a woman living in Dong Da, Hanoi only has about 4 hours to do everything: cooking, cleaning and tidying up the house, washing clothes, taking care of her children, taking a bath and spending time on her hobbies. Not to mention the time she has to spend for sex.

Since her priority is the housework, she can only think about other activities after finishing it. However, when being done with those works, she is so tired that she has to go to sleep immediately. Everything will be repeated the next day.

If she keeps silent and works hard to manage everything without any complaint, her family will be happy and Duy, her husband will be satisfied. However, her capacity is limited and she also has demand for resting.

Sometimes, she confines her desire to her husband, hoping that he can help her with the housework, but he immediately replies that: “You are not allowed to envy your husband!”. Thinking of a family where both wife and husband share housework happily makes her feel pity for herself. To her, that scene is out of her reach.

Duy does not give his hand to help his wife in any housework but he loves having tasty meals, living in a tidy house with obedient kids and a sweet wife. He wants to have everything and if she cannot fulfill that, he starts to complain: “You cannot finish those simple works? Why don’t you open your eyes widely to watch Thang’s wife!”

His comparison is so unfair because Thang’s wife does not have any job other than housework. Thuong is financially independent and she can well manage her life with her children. Her husband said that his salary is for saving but she knows that he cannot save any money due to the way he spends.

Moreover, her health is not in a good condition and the history of a broken leg last year prevents her from standing for a long time. Occasionally, she told him about her health to seek for his understanding but he just answered ironically: “What a huge works you have done!”

Being angry because of his ignorance, she shouted at him: “I got married to be a wife, not a servant!”

As she stopped her sentence, he slapped her strongly on her face and said in anger: “You envy your husband for such trifles like cooking or cleaning! Don’t you know how to be a woman? If you cannot do those works, just tell me because there are many other people who can. Let me tell you, there are 9 out of 10 men who don’t do housework. If you want to divorce because of this reason then you had better not getting married”.

It is true that people rarely divorce because their husbands do not share the housework, but if this situation continues, she will be withered. For several years in her marriage, she has been seeking for a solution to her problem but she still cannot find it.

The day Hanh, a woman living in Ngo Quyen, Hai Phong got married, her mother-in-law happily passed on all of the housework to her. It is uncertain about how well she has done her duty in the past, but now she has a very high requirement for her daughter-in-law.

After having dinner, Kiem, Hanh’s husband goes to his room to sit on the computer, her mother-in-law goes to their neighbors for chatting, so Hanh has to do the housework by herself. When her mother-in-law returns home, she will complain if she sees dust anywhere in the house.

Hanh could reluctantly obey her mother-in-law before giving birth, but now when she has her first child, the amount of work that she has to deal with is multiplied. Every day, after a whole day of working at her company, she only has a few hours staying at home for cooking, washing dishes, cleaning two floors of the house with 3 bedrooms, a living room and a kitchen, taking a bath for her kid, feeding her and getting her to bed.

According to her husband and mother-in-law, those works are easy and simple, but finishing them is enough for her to be tired. Some days she does not have enough time to even have a shower. The days when the family of her brother-in-law visits her house are the time that she suffers the most since she has to cleaning and washing everything without anyone’s help.

She recognizes that her husband does not feel pity for her, and her mother-in-law does not consider her her daughter-in-law but every family member thinks of her as a servant which is free of charge. Nowadays, house helpers are even better than her in many

ways. She remembers the house helper of her colleague, after cleaning the house, her colleague asked her to wash the motorbike but she replied that: “No! I am tired after cleaning”. Finally, her colleague softly convinced her: “Then could you please do it for me tomorrow”. As for Hanh, she has never dared to talk to her husband and her mother-in-law that way.

She has not expressed her thought to her mother-in-law, but she talked to her husband about that. Unexpectedly, her husband was surprised, saying that: “Those are duties of a wife and a daughter-in-law. My mother had fulfilled them for many years without saying a single word. How could you moan about that when you have just done a few works?”

Frankly, Hanh does not want to envy other people for doing housework. She needs the sympathy and a little help from other family members, just enough for her to feel that they care about her. Nevertheless, when she is busy and tired with housework after working in the office, her husband just sits there, reading newspaper, watching TV or surfing the internet. He insists on not hanging the washed clothes for her because he thinks that it is the woman’s duty.

She complains and he shouted at her: “You are jealous about your husband for such small things like cleaning or washing! Don’t you know how to be a woman?”. She is fed up with her husband. Moreover, her mother-in-law always says that: “Women have to be good in her career and in doing housework as well. Don’t be arrogant because you earn a lot of money. If you don’t do housework, you are like trash!”

There was a period of time when Hanh had to go back home late because of her work in the office. Every family member started to complain about her. Her mother-in-law blamed her for being irresponsible. Her sister-in-law ironically called her “Western sister-in-law”. Her husband was angry with her, he said: “Whatever you do, try to come back home early! Do you forget that you are a daughter-in-law in this family? Since you cannot do anything for our family, don’t you want to avoid your responsibility of taking care of your husband and mother-in-law as well?”

Why did no one ask her such a question like: “Are you tired?”, “Did you eat anything? Were you busy in the office?” Everyone blamed her for not coming home to serve them. Thinking about that made her want to cry.

Many times she has thought about leaving this family to live alone with her kid, but divorcing because of that reason seems to be non-sense since from the outside, Kiem, her husband has nothing for her to complain about. If she tells the story, people may say that her husband was too good and she was just too demanding. Consequently, she just kept bearing the situation in silence, thinking that it is the best solution for her kid.