Gender Perceptions in a Vietnamese Community

The Impact of Acculturation on First- and Second-Generation Immigrant Women in Norway

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Abstract

This thesis seeks to analyze how Vietnamese women have settled into Norwegian society since their arrival during the mid-1970s to early 80s. It seeks to investigate how acculturation has impacted how migrant mothers have raised their daughters. Additionally, this thesis seeks to understand whether conflict occurs between the migrant mothers and their daughters due to conflicting perceptions of gender norms. There is limited research on these relationships among Vietnamese immigrants in Norway. Therefore, this thesis attempts to cover the research gap by answering the following question: *how has acculturation into Norwegian society impacted the cultural transmission of traditional, Vietnamese gender norms from the first-generation to the second-generation Vietnamese women?*

The thesis has one chapter that develops a theoretical framework and a second that reviews extant literature. The theoretical framework discusses acculturation and various aspects of gender theory. The acculturation section emphasizes the tactics migrants use when they settle in a new country such as *assimilation, separation, marginalization,* and *integration* and the how these tactics impact migrants' social and/or mental well-being. The section on gender highlights that gender is a social construct that is reproduced by people who "do" gender and how "doing" gender impacts the roles they play. The second chapter discusses literature on cultural transmission, intergenerational conflict, and notions of gender in Vietnamese communities. In order to evaluate these propensities in the participants of this study, this thesis utilizes a semi-structured interview to adapt to the participants responses of their own experiences living in Bergen, Norway.

The findings suggest that the first-generation participants perceived themselves to be unaffected by their move to Norway and thus, migration did not impact the gender norms they wished to transmit to their daughters. While the main component of Vietnamese womanhood – sacrificing their own wants and desire for their family – appeared to be successfully transmitted, the second-generation believed their mother – contrary to what the first-generation participants thought – were impacted by Norwegian gender norms as their mothers encouraged their daughters to be independent of men and to speak up for themselves. Furthermore, the boys in the family were taught to do tasks that were generally seen to be within the domain of women back in Vietnam, thus, suggesting that the first-generation taught their sons the same norms they taught their daughters.

When it comes to intergenerational conflict between mothers and daughters the findings suggest there was little conflict on notions of womanhood between the mothers and daughters of the study. However, this does not mean that intergenerational conflict, when it comes to cultural transmission, does not exist. The second-generation participants mention that these problems were prevalent amongst their friends or close family members, just not between the two participants. This thesis demonstrates that most first-generation participants are indeed impacted by their acculturation into Norwegian society. As they attempted to culturally transmit values of Vietnamese womanhood to their daughters, they also encouraged the second-generation to incorporate Norwegian gender norms in their daily life.

Key words: Vietnamese migrant women, cultural transmission, intergenerational conflict, gender norms

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Up to this point, I had never taken on a writing endeavor of this magnitude. It turned out to be a rewarding process just as it was incredibly challenging. At many times I doubted my ability to finish. But here I am, at the end of the journey. I have learned so much about the writing process and about my subject. However, this would not have been possible if I did not have the support of those around me.

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1 Introduction

Moving to a country that has vastly different values influences how people view themselves and can therefore impact how they navigate their surroundings. The purpose of this project is to understand how women in the Vietnamese community in Norway, particularly in Bergen, perceive their gender norms and identities through the acculturation process. The underlying meaning of gender is "the complex ways in which societies and cultures organize and define sexual differences" (Stimpson & Herdt, 2015, p. 2), which means that gender is subject to change and varies among different cultures. When migrants settle in another country, they often find themselves navigating different cultural interpretations of gender. In such instances, a process of acculturation occurs when two cultures meet, resulting in a cultural and psychological change in which an individual adapts to their situation (Sam & Berry, 2010, p. 472). However, the impact of acculturation can differ between generations, particularly with the first-generation that was raised in their home country and the second-generation that was raised in the host country. Differing experiences impacts the first-generation's attempts to transfer their home country's gender values to their daughters, i.e. the cultural transmission in which "cultural elements, in the form of attitudes, values, beliefs, and behavioral scripts, are passed onto and taught to individuals and groups" (Taylor & Thoth, 2011, p. 448). Nevertheless, this cultural transmission may lead to an intergeneration conflict, a conflict of agreement between parents and children, specifically in how the second-generation perceives themselves culturally (Rasmi & Daly, 2016).

The project centers around the perception of gender among first- and second-generation Vietnamese women in Norway. I focus specifically on cultural transmission and intergenerational conflict between mothers and daughters because this will provide an understanding about how these two generations of Vietnamese women have dealt with the generational change due to their migration to another culture. In this context, to understand women in the Vietnamese community in Norway, it is important to understand gender dynamics not only in Vietnam but also in Norway. This will provide a framework of what gender norms the first-generation Vietnamese women have grown up with and whether changing gender values occur when they emigrated from Vietnam to Norway. Additionally, it will put into perspective what Vietnamese gendered influences the second-generation Vietnamese women have grown up with by being raised in Norway. Thus, this chapter will address the historical background that caused the Vietnamese women and their families to move as well as how the dominant gender norms came to be in Vietnam and in Norway.

1.1 Migration from Vietnam: A Brief Historical Background

The necessity of knowing the historical background is to give more context to the reasons why the first-generation participants decided to move to Norway especially because they emigrated from this period. After the end of the first Indochina War, Vietnam found themselves forcibly divided between North and South, with the North having a communist ideology and the South, encouraged by the U.S. to pursue a liberal and democratic agenda. What ensued was a war between competing ideologies with the South being assisted by the U.S. Ultimately, the communist North defeated the South and reunited the two sides under the Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP). This was called the Fall of Saigon. With the decisive victory of the North, those who were in opposition were forced to flee or face persecution under the auspices of the VCP. Those who fled during the following two decades after the war in 1975 made up the first group of Vietnamese refugees[1] to Western countries (Chung, 2002; Pelaud, 2014). Mass migration from Vietnam came in several waves and with each wave came stories about brutalities, hunger, and the lack of freedom the migrants experienced under the Communist regime who saw them as "willing collaborators and traitorous agents of the imperialists" (Chung, 2002, p. 38).

As an authoritarian regime, those who questioned its legitimacy were harassed, denied employment or imprisoned (Thayer, 2010). Furthermore, after the war, the economic standing of Vietnam continued to deteriorate because of poor economic management, the diversion of resources to its military on the Cambodian and Chinese borders, and harvesting disasters. Poor economic management occurred because they forced laborers to work primarily on agricultural production but faced a goods shortage due to bad harvest, therefore, not making up for their losses. They also disrupted the working market system in South Vietnam by confiscating lands, factories, and personal wealth without considering the consequences which also wiped out the savings of the Southern owners (Dayley & Neher, 2013, p. 111; Grinter, 2006, p. 153). Additionally, with Cambodia invading Vietnam in 1978, the party launched an all-out retaliation which was met in response by Cambodia's ally China. Vietnam declared a 'state of national mobilization', redirecting resources to their wartime efforts, lasting several years (Dayley & Neher, 2013, p. 111; Thayer, 2010, p. 427). The apparent lack of freedom that Vietnamese citizens experienced, the economic deterioration, and the ongoing war were key push factors causing many Vietnamese citizens to leave the country.

[1] Throughout this thesis, I will use migrants and refugees interchangeably.

Since the Fall of Saigon in 1975, approximately one to one-and-a-half million refugees left their home in three different waves (Knudsen, 1990, p. 153; Pelaud, 2014, p. 8). The first wave of refugees occurred between 1975 to around 1978 were people who had connections to the U.S. military force. They were considered wealthy and educated, but left in a frenzy because they were key targets of the VCP's post-war crackdowns due to their connections with U.S. military. The second wave happened around 1978 to 1982 in which refugees fled Vietnam due to its economic plans, the border clashes with Cambodia and China, and political repression and economic dislocation caused by trade sanctions from the West. The following waves after 1982 were under family reunification and humanitarian acts that allowed former South Vietnamese soldiers to relocate to escape communist persecution, and becoming increasingly voluntary migration (Le Espiritu & Tran, 2002, p. 395; Pelaud, 2014, pp. 10–12).

1.2 Gender in Vietnam and Norway

When China invaded Vietnam around 111 B.C. (Marino, 1998, p. 91), Confucianist ideology was gradually spread throughout the country emphasizing kinship; that "family interest are prioritized over individual desires and needs" (Hoang, 2016, p. 893). During the time that Confucianist thought proliferated in Vietnam, it became integrated into Vietnamese society and culture, shaping gender norms. Confucianism stressed the submission of women to men, from being dependent to their fathers as young girls, to their husbands as married women, and later on, their sons as widows (Duong, 2001; Knodel, Loi, Jayakody, & Huy, 2005, p. 71; Marino, 1998, p. 91). It was not until the VCP came into power that the government implemented gender neutral policies to rally all men and women to fight for their nation; women took over roles that were generally designated to men—for example being head of the family and picking up arms (Healy, 2006; Knodel et al., 2005, p. 71; Marino, 1998, p. 91). Additionally, to relieve women the burden of taking care of children while working in the place of men, the state provided childcare services (Wisensale, 1999, p. 605). Despite the VCP's attempts to alter gender norms, Confucianist thought remained prevalent—women were, and still are, expected to retain their domestic skills, be a good wife and mother. Furthermore, Vietnamese social norms ascribe women as having the responsibility "of maintaining family harmony and preserving the 'face' of the family" (Vu, Schuler, Hoang, & Quach, 2014, p. 635). Therefore, the failure to uphold these social norms, by prioritizing education or work for example, often results in criticism by members of both genders (Nguyen & Simkin, 2017).

While Norway is considered one of the most gender equal countries globally, it has not always so. Norwegian gender policies used to be mainly concerned with maternal rights and social policies that supported women's role as mothers and caregivers. Norway was characterized with conservative reforms with a strong hold on traditional "male-bread winner" norms (Ellingsæter, 1998; Selbervik & Østebø, 2013). Women were thus expected to be first and foremost wives and mothers. Change occurred in the 1970s-80s when the state increased public care for children, increasing focus on men's role as fathers and caregivers and women's economic independence (Haukanes & Heggli, 2016, p. 5; Selbervik & Østebø, 2013). By increasing childcare services, the state was providing women with the economic freedom to pursue a job and join the labor force. This came with an effort to equalize men's role in the family, rather than just as regarding them as the main bread-winner (Selbervik & Østebø, 2013). Other policies that helped women into the labor force was extending maternity leave, but also endorsing paternity leave (Barstad, 2014, p. 973; Crompton & Harris, 1997, p. 195). As such, in Norwegian policies, there is supposed to be a balance regarding women and men as both caregivers and laborers and thus, Norwegian women are encouraged to enter relationships based on equality. However, Norwegian women still appear to have more responsibilities than men for household chores and childcare despite the state's attempt to promote gender equality in the domestic sphere (Bernhardt, Noack, & Lyngstad, 2008; Knudsen & Wærness, 2009, p. 43).

From these two perspectives of gender, the two are similar in the fact that the state attempted to implement gender equality despite the two countries' differing circumstances. However, from the Vietnamese gender norms, women appear to have more responsibilities in maintaining the family's status than the women in Norway. Additionally, while the state encourages women to work, Vietnamese social norms seems to expect women to be more concerned with the family. There seems to be more social acceptance for Norwegian women to think about their own individual advancement.

As this study is based upon the perception of gender, it is important to understand the gender norms that the first-generation participants grew up with and if these gender norms still influenced what they teach their daughters. Additionally, understanding Norwegian gender norms provides a comparison to how the participants perceive differences in gender norms during their settlement in Bergen. It would also give an understanding of what type of gender norms that the second-generation grew up with in Norway as their mothers attempted to teach them Vietnamese gender norms.

1.3 Research Questions

The purpose of this research paper is based upon the following main research question:

How has acculturation into Norwegian society impacted the cultural transmission of traditional, Vietnamese gender norms from the first-generation to the second-generation Vietnamese women?

Under this question, a set of sub-questions will be investigated. These questions are informed by the theory and literature review that will be discussed in the following two chapters:

a. How do the participants assess the acculturation of first-generation participants into Norwegian society?
b. How do the first- and second-generation participants perceive Vietnamese and Norwegian gender norms, and the influence these gender norms have on their daily life?
c. What cultural notions of womanhood do the first-generation participants want to transmit to their daughters?
d. When cultural transmission of womanhood happens, how do the participants handle possible intergenerational conflict?

1.4 How Does This Study Contribute to the Literature?

The research topic is relevant academically because it fills a research gap concerning Vietnamese communities in Norway in which I interview Vietnamese women from Bergen. Cultural transmission and its relation to intergenerational conflict when dealing with gender perception in first- and second-generation among Vietnamese immigrants in Norway is not researched in detail. While the literature from other Western contexts suggests that parents, particularly mothers, are enforcing gender norms, they do not specify or describe how it is done and not much is known about how daughters handle these transmissions, especially in a Norwegian context. I hope to fill this gap by endeavoring to understand what gender norms first-generation mothers attempt to culturally transmit to their daughters. This would explain what they thought was most important to them. Furthermore, by interviewing their daughters, we can learn something about how the gendered transmission was received and to what extent conflict emerged between the mother and daughter. The literature that exists so far – even though they mention these aspects separately – tend not to deal with these elements together.

1.5 Structure of the Thesis

In the next chapter (2), I will introduce the theoretical frameworks that are relevant to the thesis and explain why these theories are important to the research question at hand. The theories this research will employ is the acculturation theory and a combination of different types of gender theory.

In chapter 3, I intend to provide a literature review of cultural transmission and intergenerational conflict while introducing concepts that are important to the research. I will also provide an overview of the existing literature on Vietnamese communities in Western societies, with particular focus on gender and the Nordic countries.

In chapter 4, I will discuss the methodology employed in this research study. I will also discuss my process of data collection and data analysis as well as provide a reflection of the roles and challenges I experienced as a researcher. Ending the chapter, I will discuss the ethical considerations I had to make throughout the process of my data collection and analysis.

Chapter 5 to 8 will present the results from my empirical findings. The chapters will give an account of the migration process that the participants had to go through, followed by how they understood gender norms in Vietnam and Norway. It will then explore the impact these gender norms had and still have on the participants. The last part of chapter 8 will look into how successful the process of gender transmissions from mother to daughter and whether the participants felt they were in conflict in any way with each other.

Chapter 9 will discuss the empirical findings guided by the theoretical framework and literature reviewed in accordance with the sub-questions posited in this introductory chapter. It is in this chapter that there will be an active discussion with the literature reviewed.

Chapter 10 concludes this research paper by discussing the main research question and how the previous chapters' discussions contributes to the overall finding. At the end, this chapter concludes the thesis my summarizing the main findings of this research study.

2 Theoretical Framework

Given the nature of my research question, finding the right theoretical framework to base the analysis on is important. I have divided this chapter into two parts. First, I will attempt to conceptualize acculturation and the main viewpoints that acculturation is based upon. Most importantly, it will discuss the different types of available acculturation tactics that Vietnamese migrants had at their disposal when they settled down in Norway. In the second part, I will turn to several different aspects of gender theory in order to conceptualize how gender is a social construct that is changing over time and dependent on the culture that is forming the gender norms. Gender theory is important to gauge how the Vietnamese participants have changed in their perception of gender after being exposed to two different types of gender norms.

2.1 Acculturation

For migrants, settling in a new country often affords a host of new opportunities and challenges. A significant challenge many migrants face moving from one country to another relates to cultural differences. Migrants from widely differing contexts often find themselves at odds with the receiving country's culture. Acculturation, then, is the process that occurs when one culture meets another culture and the strategies individuals use to cope with the different cultural context. In other words, it is the "internal processes of reaction to foreign cultural influence" (Leal, 2011, p. 316). This also entails the process of possible change in cultural values of the migrants in a foreign country. By referring to this as a process, it is implied that it is continuous and takes place over time (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006; Berry & Sam, 1997; Bhatia & Ram, 2001; Marín & Gamba, 2003; Ward, 2008). Berry (2003, p. 31) posits that the acculturation process entails cultural shedding and cultural learning[2] in which the migrant either selectively, accidentally or purposely loses certain behaviors to better adapt to the receiving society. Rudmin (2009, p. 118) proposes acculturation as a cultural learning process that entails "(1) information about the second-culture, (2) instructions, (3) imitation of second-culture behaviors, and (4) mentoring by persons in the new culture."

Acculturation is a process that entails two different changes, *sociocultural* and *psychological* adaptation. *Sociocultural* adaptation is how well an individual is doing and how he or she is socially functioning in the new society whereas the *psychological* adaptation is about the life satisfaction and mental wellbeing of the individual (Berry, 2003, p. 21; Güngör & Bornstein,

[2] In this article, Berry also talks about cultural conflict in which the migrant receives some type of stress by two conflicting culture.

2013, p. 179; Sam & Berry, 2010, p. 478; Ward & Kus, 2012, p. 476). Additionally, acculturation is a two-way interaction in which the host society is impacted by the immigrants settling in as much as the host society impacts the immigrants (Sam & Berry, 2010). However, for the purpose of this research, the concentration will be on how the host society impacts the immigrant's way of life.

A central element of acculturation pertains to whether a migrant chooses from a spectrum of *cultural maintenance* of their home country to *contact and participation* in the host society (Berry, Kim, Power, Young, & Bujaki, 1989; Berry & Sam, 1997, p. 296; Ward, 2008). Within this spectrum, Berry et al. (1989) suggest that four acculturation tactics exists: *assimilation, separation, marginalization,* and *integration*. *Assimilation* is completely absorbing the host society's cultural values by seeking daily interaction with the host society and to not maintain one's own cultural identity; *separation* is avoiding interaction with the host society to maintain cultural identity; *marginalization* is isolating from one's own cultural identity and from the host countries; *integration* is when the immigrants attempt to maintain their own cultural identity while also adopting the host society's cultural values (Berry, 2003, p. 22; Berry et al., 1989, 2006, p. 306; Berry & Sam, 1997, p. 297; Bhatia & Ram, 2001, p. 4; Sam & Berry, 2010, p. 476; Ward, 2008, p. 106). Since integration implies maintaining both cultural identities, Schwartz and colleagues, (2010, p. 247) argue that "the consistent availability of both cultural streams within the person's daily repertoire increases the ease of activating the correct schema in any given situation." These are the possible tactics that the migrants would use to help their transition into a new country, which also depends on whether the receiving country's policies are encouraging or discouraging acculturation (Berry, 2003; Berry & Sam, 1997; Sam & Berry, 2010; Schwartz et al., 2010).

Since this research is based on two different generations of migrant women and their gendered experience in the host society, acculturation is important to investigate. Acculturation tactics are also impacted by age and gender. Those who migrate in their youth may have different acculturation strategies than their parents, even if the parents try to orient the youth towards or against certain cultural values from either the host or home country (Killian, 2011; Portes & Rumbaut, 2014; Schwartz, Unger, Zamboanga, & Szapocznik, 2011). As young children, individuals can more easily adopt the receiving country's way of life than those who migrate at an older age. This is due to the fact that those who are older are more likely to have vivid memories of their home country and thus, shapes how they interact with the receiving country (Berry et al., 2006; Portes & Rumbaut, 2014; Schwartz et al., 2010, 2011).

Women and men also tend to navigate acculturation differently based on their gendered identification. Güngör & Bornstein (2013, p. 181) suggest that "[g]endered acculturation is related to how male and female adolescents negotiate between their commitments to their heritage and mainstream cultures." Some studies show that adolescent girls tend to adapt better socioculturally and seem more willing to integrate than boys, whereas boys do better psychologically[3] (Berry et al., 2006; Güngör & Bornstein, 2013; Phinney, Berry, Vedder, & Liebkind, 2006). Furthermore, if migrants come from a society with traditional gender norms at the time of migration, then depending on where they migrate, the traditional family structure could be changed due to the migrants exposure to the different gender norms of the receiving society (Güngör & Bornstein, 2013; Vedder, van de Vijver, & Liebkind, 2006). Therefore, acculturation theory is appropriate to study the changes the two generation, if any, go through when it pertains to their gender experience and to compare if there is any difference in how they acculturate.

2.2 Gender

As the previous section has indicated, gender influences the lived experiences of individuals and how they navigate society, especially, in a society with different cultural norms. Gender is typically defined as the perceived differences between women and men (Costa, Terracciano, & McCrae, 2001; Iversen & Rosenbluth, 2010; Risman, 2004; West & Zimmerman, 1987). These differences often manifest in the form of the body which becomes a symbolic representation of gender (Butler, 1988; Connell & Pearse, 2014; Smith-Rosenberg, 2014). Thus, it is assumed that there is only two ways of identifying oneself, as either male or female (West & Zimmerman, 1987, p. 128). These propensities are seen as "natural", but there are and have always been people that do not fall into this gender binary (Connell & Pearse, 2014; Monro, 2005).

As argued by West and Zimmerman (1987), gender is a social construction in which people "do" gender by acting out what is expected of them. Thus, people cannot "have" gender. According to this view, doing gender refers to an individual acting out the roles they are expected to play based on their perceived gender (Butler, 1988, 2004; West & Zimmerman, 1987). What this entails is that there are institutionalized social norms and social structures that regulate roles and behaviors based on the perceived gender. These norms and structures are

[3] This is because boys face more discrimination than girls and girls are given more opportunities, especially if they are from a gender traditional society.

then reproduced by individuals through their enactment of it in interactions with others. As people continue to keep up the gendered institutions, the gendered institutions will remain (Connell & Pearse, 2014; Foster, 1999; Iversen & Rosenbluth, 2010, p. 2; Monro, 2005; Risman, 2004; West & Zimmerman, 1987). While the following section will discuss the construction of womanhood and manhood, it is important to recognize that there are those who challenge the gender binary.

The institutions that regulate gender roles and behavior is susceptible to the culture it belongs to. Since gender is constructed as differences, the magnitude in differences may vary between cultures. Costa et al. (2001, p. 324) maintains that "In some cultures, gender differences may be exaggerated; in others, they may be masked." Thus, gender definitions and norms are different across geopolitical boundaries and people face different cultural constraints (Butler, 2004). As the construction of gender varies by culture, individuals perceive gender through a set of culturally available symbols that define femininity or masculinity that occur in public and private settings (Crehan, 2015; Schiwy, 2007; Stimpson & Herdt, 2015; Warner, 2015). Therefore, the individual will enact what has been deemed as appropriate for their culture. This does not mean that these symbols are static; over time, culture changes and with it, so does gender as it is constantly being negotiated and renegotiated (Connell & Pearse, 2014, p. 84; Crehan, 2015; Potuchek, 1992; Risman, 2004, 2009). These factors posit that gender is fluid, changing over time, and this means that women and men do not have to strictly adhere to the gender norms that their culture creates.

The existence of gendered institutions causes men and women to experience life, culture, and society differently from one another (Eckert, 1997, p. 247). As gender means "doing" something feminine or masculine, it is a process that the young are socialized into. Fausto-Sterling (2012, p. 408) posits that children in their first year of life begin to recognize gender difference and by the second year, adult observers can begin recognizing the child's gender identity. Children are socialized through being taught by their parents to fit into the roles society has for them, through observations of body language and preferences, and through recognizing what culturally gendered symbols are "appropriate" for them (Connell & Pearse, 2014; Fausto-Sterling, 2012; Iversen & Rosenbluth, 2010; West & Zimmerman, 1987). In order to fit in, children internalize these norms into their daily life and labelling themselves as their perceived gender (Costa et al., 2001; Fausto-Sterling, 2012; West & Zimmerman, 1987). This does not change the fact that even if they do internalize these, the children are not passively accepting the norms, they are actively navigating the gender norms, adopting norms that may not have

formerly applied to them or rebelling against the ones they are expected to follow (Connell & Pearse, 2014; Risman, 2004, 2009). As stated before, as cultures change, gender roles change too as part of the cultural, institutional norms.

In the gendered society, women and men are delegated to certain roles and behaviors. In many societies, men and women are also usually assigned to different spaces—men to the public space, women to the private space. Public space is often associated with the work place while private space is the domestic sphere (Diekman, Goodfriend, & Goodwin, 2004; Eckert, 1997; Hare-Mustin, 1988; Iversen & Rosenbluth, 2010; Potuchek, 1992; Warner, 2015). There are several commonalities in how most societies structure what women and men should do. Take the division of labor, which makes it so that men are often expected to be breadwinners and women caretakers of the family. Women are represented as being at a (dis)advantage because of their function to care for children and especially if there is a lack of support in universal child care, women take the main responsibility. This is due to women's "ability" to put themselves second by caring for others in their family first (Diekman et al., 2004, p. 202; Han & Moen, 1999; Hare-Mustin, 1988; Iversen & Rosenbluth, 2010). It implies that women often occupy a more subordinate position than men and that a sharp contrast is created between men and women and the role they are supposed to play in society.

As mentioned above, gender norms are prone to change and are not universal. Iversen and Rosenbluth (2010) and Lewis (2001) argue that women have always been part of the labor force because a pure male breadwinner model has never. As the world became more industrialized, women began to enter the previously masculine sphere of the labor workforce at a much higher rate, obtaining status as shared-breadwinners. With this progress women gained more independence and did not need to rely on men to the same extent as before. They were encouraged to enter into more equality based relationships (Diekman et al., 2004; Hare-Mustin, 1988; Iversen & Rosenbluth, 2010; Lewis, 2001; Lopez-Zafra & Garcia-Retamero, 2012). This obtainment, however, did not negate their role as the primary caretaker even though men were increasingly taking on that role. Men's increasing presence in the domestic sphere has not risen as much as women's in the work sphere (Han & Moen, 1999, p. 101; Iversen & Rosenbluth, 2010, p. 169; Lewis, 2001, p. 155; Lopez-Zafra & Garcia-Retamero, 2012, p. 178). Additionally, while there is an upward trend in women in the public sphere, as mentioned before, they still face certain discriminations due to their reproductive capacity. Even so, as women continue to increase in the labor force, they continuously gain more power to increase their rights within the work force.

As the participants in this study come from a traditional society in terms of gender, it is reasonable to expect that migration has upset the gender norms in the family. As women become more exposed to the opportunities that lie before them, they are still seen as the carriers of their home country's culture and, therefore, attempt to enforce culturally appropriate and traditional gender roles in the home (Güngör & Bornstein, 2013; Vedder et al., 2006, p. 146). Thus, the importance of these different types of gender theories in relations to this study is that it provides a guideline to understanding the two generations' perception of gender. Gender impacts the participant's acculturation experience because different societies have different gender norms for women to fulfill. The participants are exposed to two different environments that has different expectations on how women should be, what roles they play, and how they interact with those around them. This makes it important to understand how the women in this study perceive these different gender norms and how it influences their own gendered identity.

3 Literature Review

The central focus of this research is, as previously stated, how acculturation into a new society impact cultural transmission of gender norms. Such cultural transmissions can often create intergenerational conflict as different generations often pursue different acculturation tactics to cope with both opportunities and challenges in the host country. In the context of two widely different cultures and societies – with different gendered expectations – such intergenerational conflicts are even more probable. The purpose of this chapter is two-fold. Firstly, it aims to explain some important concepts that are relevant to the research question, including cultural transmission and intergenerational conflict. Secondly, it seeks to review extant literature about these subjects. Consequently, this literature review aspires to complement the theoretical framework by examining studies of processes of migration and acculturation in similar contexts and specifically relate it to cultural transmission and intergenerational conflict in the family.

To this end, the chapter is divided into several different sections. For the first two sections, I conceptualize and review the literature on cultural transmission and intergenerational conflict. With cultural transmission, I explain in which ways transmission occurs both at the micro and macro levels. With intergenerational conflict, I shed light on the categorization of conflict and on how children of migrants deal with conflict. Cultural transmission is relevant to this study in understanding how the first-generation Vietnamese women try to impart Vietnamese values to their daughters. Intergenerational conflict is important because it relates to the disagreements that occur when the second-generation has contradicting ideals of what it means to be a woman, based on their unique acculturation experience in the host country.

Several sections in this chapter review the literature that is available about the Vietnamese migrant communities more broadly, then taking a closer looker on specific studies of gender. Looking at the existing literature on gender in the Vietnamese community is also important in shaping the understanding and creating a story of what is to be expected in the empirical section.

3.1 Cultural Transmission

Cultural transmission comes from the theory of cultural evolution and has two different meanings. The first meaning of cultural transmission includes elements of evolutionary psychology in which there is a genetic blueprint that is passed down to one generation to the next in order to deal with, and is shaped by, the environment. A second way that cultural transmission can be understood is the transfer of social values from one person transmitting to

another person on the receiving end[4] (Cavalli-Sforza & Feldman, 1981; Schönpflug, 2008; Smith, Kalish, Griffiths, & Lewandowsky, 2008). There are three different types of social cultural transmission that can occur: 1) *vertical*, where the parents or caregiver pass on their cultural knowledge to the children, 2) *horizontal*, when members of the same generation pass on cultural knowledge to each other, and 3) *oblique* transmission is when one generation passes on cultural knowledge to the next generation regardless of relationship (Cavalli-Sforza & Feldman, 1981; Taylor & Thoth, 2011, p. 448). *Vertical* transmission includes the transmission of personality traits, cognitive development, conception of the gendered self, and beliefs about religion, politics, among others, whereas *horizontal* and *oblique* transmission transfers attitudes, acceptable behavior, rituals such as songs or stories, and conformity (Schönpflug, 2008, p. 5). The act of cultural transmission is recognizing which of those aspects can be defined and simultaneously be done unconsciously many times until it becomes a part of their daily lives. It thus requires the people involved in the transmission process to have some form of awareness of these aspects (Cavalli-Sforza & Feldman, 1981, p.62; Zucker, 1977). Cavalli-Sforza and Feldman (1981) also posits that in order for cultural transmission to possibly occur, there needs to be an acceptance of those social aspects. An example of awareness and acceptance is a society or community perceiving itself as a collective community. In perceiving itself as such, the community makes a verbal claim that becomes internalized in their daily life for so long as the person accepts it.

Subsequently, once these steps of awareness and acceptance are completed, there needs to be way to maintain these transmissions (Zucker, 1977). This can be done by repeatedly doing the same or enacting the same cultural values by incorporating it into everyday life. This repetition, if the person chooses to accept, teaches him or her a little more of the values until it becomes ingrained in their everyday actions and behaviors (Acerbi & Tennie, 2016; Inman, Howard, Beaumont, & Walker, 2007, p. 98). However, the awareness of aspects the person wants to transmit means a certain type of personal preference over another trait. This means that the "human learners bring a number of biases for particular sorts of content to social learning tasks… and these biases result in more faithful transmission of information that meets the content biases of individuals" (Smith et al., 2008, p. 3470). Consequently, the person passes along cultural values that they identify the most with to the next generation.

[4] As this paper does not attempt to answer questions about genetics as a factor to gender transmission, this paper will mainly concern itself with the latter definition.

Cultural transmission is a process that is not limited to immigrant communities; they include non-immigrants as well. Take for example the study done by Adriani, Matheson, and Sonderegger (2018). They study the likelihood of a child to indulge in smoking depending on the parents' attitude towards it. This was a study in the value of self-gratification and self-restraint, using smoking as the indulgent factor. The authors found that a child was more likely to smoke if they saw their parents smoke. If the smoking parent refrains from smoking because they do not want it to impact the child, the transmission of values is less clear. As such, the authors conclude that if the child perceives their parents as role models, the child is susceptible to both self-gratification and self-restraint, based on the practices of their parents with respect to smoking.

For many first-generation immigrants, the preservation of cultural identity is important. Cultural identity is a sense of their own ethnic and national identity (Vedder et al., 2006, p. 71). This is because first-generation immigrants have a bond with their home country and the transmission of their cultural values is a way of retaining cultural identity as well as their children's in a foreign country. By being in a foreign country, immigrants often trigger a *cultural transmission motive,* which means the explicit or implicit "desire to preserve the culture of origin and transmit it to the next generation" (Mchitarjan & Reisenzein, 2015, p. 2). Cultural transmission is therefore closely tied to acculturation. As mentioned earlier, acculturation is the process of choosing which aspect of the dominant culture to adapt and therefore, impact what the first-generation may want to share with their children.

In a study by Inman et al. (2007), they concentrate on the Asian-Indian immigrant community in the United States. They state that this group of immigrants have been selective in how they adapt to the dominant culture. This can be seen in how they hold onto their core values such as family, food preferences, and/or religion from their homeland, but adopt the dominant culture's dress etiquette or public customs. These core values give them credibility in retaining their culture in the eyes of their immigrant community and are important to pass along to their children.

In another research by Bowen and Devine (2011), also in the U.S., they study the cultural transmission of food in the Puerto Rican community to girls. The girls' exposure to Puerto Rican food was determined by whether or not their family – particularly mothers and grandmothers – cooked traditional food or only the dominant culture's food. Food is essential because Puerto Rican culture emphasize the importance of cooking as a way of expressing familial love and ethnic pride.

All these examples show, from the micro-levels of living on whether to indulge in smoking, to the macro-level of what culture means to those who are non-immigrants to immigrants, that cultural transmission exists in many of the actions or behavior that people acquire. However, cultural transmission is not a one-way street. Inman et al. (2007) explained that Asian-Indian parents became much more broad-minded about how they raised their children because they had limited control in the relationship. Thus, there is a reverse form of cultural transmission; the parents changed how they raised children based on the relationship their children had with them in the host society. This case show that if the parents have to change their parenting style, based on culturally sensitive feedback from their children, it suggests that there may have been some form of disagreement or conflict nested in different perspectives on culture. Since cultural transmission requires some planning and instruction, such processes are often affected by factors such as the children unwillingness to accept the culture or due to extended influences within and outside of the family (Bowen & Devine, 2011, p. 296; Mchitarjan & Reisenzein, 2014, p. 191).

In relation to gender, it is important to learn what Vietnamese values of womanhood the first-generation attempted to culturally transmit to their daughters. Important to cultural transmission is also how the first-generation socialize their daughters to accept these norms and how it impacts the way the second-generation "do" gender and interact with others. However, in order for cultural transmission to be successful, it requires intergenerational continuity, or acceptance from the next generation, in order to survive and this may or may not lead to intergenerational conflict, to which I now turn.

3.2 Intergenerational Conflict

When an individual decides not to accept cultural transmission that previous generations are conveying, intergenerational conflict occurs. Some studies define intergenerational conflict as a disagreement between the parent and their adolescent to young adult child (Dennis, Basañez, & Farahmand, 2010; Kwak, 2003; Yau & Smetana, 2003). Intergenerational conflict covers two different types of conflict; one is over everyday issues – social values – such as who to be friends with and household chores, and the second one is over different cultural values (Lee, Choe, Kim, & Ngo, 2000; Rasmi & Daly, 2016; Yau & Smetana, 2003). The literature revolves predominantly around the nature of intergenerational conflicts, how they emerge, and how they are dealt with.

Conflict over social values are part of any normal parent-child dynamic thus, occurs universally (Birditt, Tighe, Fingerman, & Zarit, 2012; Dennis et al., 2010, p. 119; Steinberg, 2001; Yau & Smetana, 2003). This type of conflict is usually in the confines of the child's perceived autonomy in which the child is navigating his or her own self-identity and how their autonomy impacts others around them, especially family members (Kwak, 2003, p. 116). Should conflict occur, Steinberg (2001, p. 6) argues, "Many of the matters that parents and teenagers argue about are seen by parents as involving codes of right and wrong—either moral codes or, more likely, codes that are based on social conventions [but]… are seen by teenagers as matters of personal choice." It is, therefore, normal for negative qualities to enter the relationship such as when the parent and child get on each other's nerves, criticize or demand too much of each other (Birditt et al., 2012, p. 628). So long as these conflicts remain mild throughout their relationship, these types of tensions are to be expected.

Much like cultural transmission, intergenerational conflict also varies between those considered as "non-immigrant" and "immigrant." Immigrants are more likely to experience intergenerational conflict with cultural values because their experiences differ from the non-immigrant population (Kwak, 2003). That being the case, cultural values would include values that define them against the larger society of non-immigrants such as family expectations or obligations (Phinney & Vedder, 2006; Rasmi & Daly, 2016, p. 2). When immigrants move to a society with different cultural values, it is possible that conflict between parent and child occur because the child has more interactions with the foreign society (Kwak, 2003, p. 121). It is possible that age plays a role because the young are more easily influenced by their surrounding and do not have the same type of exposure to traditional culture as their parents (Tsai-Chae & Nagata, 2008, p. 205).

The disruption occurs because the two generations acculturate at different rates, with the first-generation more set in their cultural ways and the second-generation quickly picking up the host country's values. Furthermore, because the first-generation is set in their cultural ways, there is an expectation that their children maintain their home country's traditions (Lee et al., 2000, p. 211). Consequently, the parents may resist or not support the child's acculturation efforts (Kwak, 2003). By moving to another society, normal family processes that take place in the home society may become disrupted by intergenerational cultural *dissonance* and lead to misunderstandings or miscommunication (Choi, He, & Harachi, 2008). Intergenerational cultural dissonance is a concept that Choi et al. use to define a clash between the parent and child because the parent adheres to their home country's cultural beliefs while their children

endorses the host country's culture (Choi et al., 2008, p. 85). The concept is similar to intergenerational conflict but deals specifically with the cultural aspect of conflict (as opposed to social norms). Dennis et al. (2010, p. 130) also posits that is possible that "cultural discrepancies with parents become more salient and pronounced throughout early adulthood as young people take on more responsibilities of adulthood." As a result, cultural intergenerational conflict could be more prevalent in immigrant communities in comparison to non-immigrants. Furthermore, cultural intergenerational conflict can also exacerbate normative social conflict as cultural values also shape the social values one takes on.

Since this study focuses on Vietnamese immigrants in Norway, literature on intergenerational conflict amongst the immigrants is of particular interest. Lim, et al. (2008) studied Chinese-American adolescents and examined whether the acculturation gap[5] between them and their parents (particularly the mothers) affected the adolescent's stress factor. Finding that there was partial correlation between those two variables, they decided to see if intergenerational conflict and parenting style (conceptualized as levels of parental warmth[6] and parental control) mediated between the two variables. Finding no support for mediation, they did find a significant correlation between intergenerational conflict and parenting style. Substantially interpreted, these variables contributed directly to adolescent stress. This because intergenerational conflict was related to whether or not the parent showed high-level of warmth or high-level of control to their child. For example, if there were high levels of warmth and low levels of control, intergenerational conflict was less likely to happen as it would not contribute to stress. Conversely, low-level of warmth and high-level control increased the likelihood of intergenerational conflict. From these correlations, the manifestation of intergenerational conflict depends on if the parents expressed warmth and control in a way that the adolescent deemed as problematic or not.

Rasmi, Daly, & Chuang (2014) conducted their research on intergenerational conflict in Arab families in Canada in which they reported low-levels of intergenerational conflict. However, when there was conflict, it dealt mainly with the honor and status of the family, thus controlling how children conduct themselves with friends and in public. Here, conflict was dealt with by the second-generation through either obliging, avoiding, dominating or integrating with their parents. Obliging is defined as giving into the other party's views or demands. The avoid-style

[5] Acculturation gap refers to the differences in how quickly or slowly the two generations acculturate to the host society.
[6] Parental warmth was measured by the different ways Americans openly express affection to their children versus the restrained way Chinese parents show affection.

is preventing conflict before it starts by ignoring disagreeable situations. To dominate is to assert one's views over the other and is somewhat aggressive. To integrate is trying to find a win-win solution through cooperation and information sharing (ibid, p. 1127). The researchers found that a majority of the participants obliged their parents but also discovered there were two distinct ways children obliged their parents; some did what their parents wanted whereas others simply agreed with them but still did it behind their back. This is because Canadians value independence and an individual's actions reflected on the person themselves whereas Arabs value interdependence and the action of an individual reflected on the family (Rasmi & Daly, 2016). In this case, the participants chose to oblige to reduce intergenerational conflict but still found themselves in a disagreement with the parents on their own autonomy of how to conduct themselves.

It should be clarified that these cases illustrate how living in a host society that can generate conflict amongst the immigrants first- and second-generation due to different perceptions of cultural values. Additionally, as Kwak (2003) posits, there might be a significant difference in how immigrants would react if they had migrated to a society with similar cultural values. For Lim et al. (2008), the cause of intergenerational conflict is the parenting style, i.e. how the parent expressed affection to their child and how the child felt accepted or not by that expression. For Rasmi et al. (2014), it was the different ways in which the immigrant youths decided to handle the conflict. However, both for Chinese and Arab immigrants, the western society they migrated to considers itself to be very individualistic compared to the collective nature of their societies of origin; the western country valued independence and they valued family interdependence (Dennis et al., 2010; Lee et al., 2000; Lim et al., 2008; Yau & Smetana, 2003). Both studies emphasized immigrant youth's perception of autonomy and how cultural differences between host country and homeland became a source of intergenerational conflict between parent and child.

Thus far, the literature review points towards how intergenerational conflict between the first- and second-generation participants can occur due to the differences in the acculturation process. For this study, it is thus necessary to examine how Vietnamese immigrants have acculturated to Norwegian society and how well. When it comes to gender, it depends on which gender norms (Vietnamese or Norwegian), the two generations identify with and the extent to which they have differing perceptions of womanhood. If these perceptions are contradictory, conflict can occur. I now turn to the extant literature on Vietnamese communities in the West.

3.3 The Vietnamese Community in the 'Western' Society

The study of gender in migrant Vietnamese communities is usually confined to research in adaptation, health, violence, or about Vietnamese refugees who escaped war (Bui & Morash, 1999; Hauff & Vaglum, 1993; Taylor et al., 2000; Tran, Manalo, & Nguyen, 2007). The Vietnamese community became established when they escaped Vietnam primarily as a result of the end of the war in 1975. The community identity was similar almost wherever they traveled. In North America – and to a lesser extent, Australia – studies have found that, due to the nature of their escape from Vietnam, refugees tended to be very anti-communist. They believed that the communism would destroy Vietnamese culture and saw it as their duty to preserve it abroad (Baldassar, Pyke, & Ben-Moshe, 2017, p. 942; Chan & Dorais, 1998, p. 298; Dorais, 2010). Over time, this sentiment diminished, including the closeness to the homeland. While the Vietnamese identity remains strong, the second-generation is often regarded as bicultural, maintaining Vietnamese culture at home but adapting to the foreign land in order to survive (Baldassar et al., 2017; Hiền, 2016; Zhou & Bankston III, 2001). The basis of Vietnamese culture is family and this holds true for the Vietnamese community abroad. Research indicates that most have retained a collectivist nature and show appreciation for family values and respect for the family hierarchy, preserving Confucian norms, even if the hierarchy infringes upon their own freedoms in the new country (Chan & Dorais, 1998; Hiền, 2016; Hoang, 2016; Lieu, 2000, p. 136). Thus, the main make-up and identity of the Vietnamese community abroad is their familial affections and obligation that they deem is different from the individualistic natures of the countries they have settled in.

3.3.1 Gender in the Vietnamese Immigrant community

While their cultural identity has remained for the most part intact, migration to a western society that encouraged different values changed the relationship between the newly arrived Vietnamese men and women. Qualitative studies from the U.S. by Kibria (1990) and Zhou and Bankston III (2001) show that many of the Vietnamese refugees sought safety in the U.S., men experienced a decline in their socioeconomic status. This made it hard for them to maintain the role as the family's main bread-winner because they needed women's help to support the family. By contributing to the economic foundation of the family, the immigrant women gained economic power and, subsequently, changed gender dynamics. Their gain in economic power, however, was due to the men's relative decline in socioeconomic status. Vietnamese men were unable to find a job that "enabled them to maintain a middle-class standard of living for their families," a position they held when they were still in Vietnam (Kibria, 1990, p. 13). Despite

this factor, the first-generation Vietnamese women did not challenge the traditional gender norms, nor did they challenge the authority of the man. Similarly, first-generation, immigrant Vietnamese men often advocated the traditional roles as a way of reaffirming their authority in the family due to the loss of social and economic status (Kibria, 1990; Nguyen, 2008). Even with the advancement in gender equality, which was necessary to survive in a foreign country, these first-generation Vietnamese still believe in maintaining the traditional Vietnamese gender norms.

Due to the individualist nature of the western society, the parents (especially the mothers) feared that their children would be losing their cultural roots, and thus, forcibly attempted to transmit traditional Vietnamese norms on the children – particularly gender norms (Chan & Dorais, 1998, p. 304; Marino, 1998). Barber (2017, p. 923) argues that it is possible for immigrant communities to reinforce and reinvent gender differences, creating a hierarchy that is "even more rigid and 'traditional' than in the homeland." The desire to create a more rigid form of traditional gender norms may be exacerbated because immigrants are in a foreign country whose values are infiltrating their daily lives and rigidity helps maintain their connection to the home country.

Additionally, research from the U.S. by Zhou and Bankston III (2001, p. 134) show that traditional gender roles may lead families to "exercise greater control over daughters." While parents valued obedience in both male and female children, the daughters are placed under stricter parental control (e.g. not going out too late, doing well in school) and are often held to a higher moral standard than male children (e.g. must be devoted to the family, not to be provocative, not having boyfriends). Meanwhile, those who have sons allowed the sons to get away with more (Kibria, 1990; Lieu, 2000; Rosenthal, 1996; Zhou & Bankston III, 2001). Aware of these double standards, second-generation girls thought it was uncomfortable and at times unfair and were generally more dissatisfied with their gender roles than their male counterparts (Robbins, 2007; Rosenthal, 1996; Zhou & Bankston III, 2001).

This, however, should not be interpreted as a disapproval of the family values as the continuation of cultural identity is still important to the second-generation, even if it pushes them towards a more traditional gender role (Baldassar et al., 2017, p. 945; Lieu, 2000, p. 135; Robbins, 2007; Zhou & Bankston III, 2001). As they start picking up on typically 'westernized' behavior that parents would condemn, the second-generation find ways to negotiate their gender identity for themselves and with their parents. Dating, for example, is something parents disapprove of because they fear the daughters will act immorally and/or become pregnant.

Rather than responding rebelliously towards this belief, some second-generation would obey the parents while others would go hang out with their girlfriends and leave to see their boyfriends alone later (Zhou & Bankston III, 2001, p. 144).

Another example of dating is negotiating with parents the lines between a "good girl" or a "bad girl". Stritikus and Nguyen (2007, p. 882) found that, even though Vietnamese migrant parents disapproved of dating in America, some would do it anyways while simultaneously maintain good grades in school since education is seen as a status symbol, thus negating the parent's fear of the girl failing. Nevertheless, the Vietnamese communities are often tightly knit communities and girls tend to face scrutiny more than their male counterparts do. Some authors, such as Kibria (1990), Rosenthal (1996), Zhou and Bankston III (2001) argue that girls who are deemed as behaving in ways not reflective of appropriate female conduct, end up being watched closely by the community to control their behavior. In turn, this makes the daughters more likely to conform to gendered expectations. Although second-generation women typically agreed with family values, the girls seemed to face more conflict in relation to how they were expected to behave in comparison to boys. The literature points to the fact that rather than protesting, most of them seem to adopt an obliging attitude to their parents and community.

3.4 The Vietnamese Community in the Nordic Countries and it's Gender Perceptions

Much like the previous section on gender in the western community, works on gender in the Vietnamese communities in Norway are limited. This made it necessary to look at other Nordic countries and analyses of gender perceptions amongst Vietnamese immigrants in these countries. In this section, the two Nordic countries under review is Finland and Norway. It is reasonable to compare these countries because of their somewhat shared history and similar host-state gender norms. This complement the gaps of the literature on gender in Vietnamese communities in Norway.

Migration to either of these Nordic countries introduced the women to a new concept: the promotion of equal gender rights which would be an opportunity to gain greater autonomy (Hauff & Vaglum, 1997, p. 413). One way to gain autonomy, despite traditional gender norms dictating men as the main breadwinner, research from Norway shows that the Vietnamese immigrant society have adopted westernized norms that fit them, for example that women are unrestricted in their employment opportunities (Kavli, 2015). Even with these opportunities, immigrant women were more likely to oppose their children's adoption of western values

because they see themselves as protectors of the Vietnamese culture (Liebkind, 1996). In protecting their Vietnamese culture, parents also enforce gender norms on their daughters, placing them under strict supervision (Knudsen, 2005, p. 138; Stiles, Gibbons, Lie, Sand, & Krull, 1998). For example, part of womanhood in the Vietnamese gender norms is being quiet and modest, and thus, being vocal is considered unfeminine. In order to navigate these expectations, the daughters that are vocal also adopt an obliging attitude by refraining from being too vocal but being outspoken outside the home (Stiles et al., 1998, p. 294).

Much of the research on gender have sought to understand immigrants in Norway in general, not specifically Vietnamese immigrants and is mostly on the health prospects of Vietnamese immigrants in Norway (Abebe, Lien, & Hjelde, 2014; Dalgard & Thapa, 2007; Kumar, Meyer, Wandel, Dalen, & Holmboe-Ottesen, 2006; Oppedal & Røysamb, 2004; Shapiro et al., 1999). While there is some mention about gendered specific analysis on mental health stress based on change in gender roles, (particularly with the immigrant parent and their children) the authors do not explain why this is the case.

Other research done on this community deal with whether they face discrimination, how much education they have, their work experience, and their social circles (Blom & Henriksen, 2009; Oppedal, 2011). There is also research on Vietnamese refugees in Norway concerned with how they are transitioning to Norway and what makes a successful transition for the immigrants. This includes factors such as ethnic identity and mastery of language (Hauff & Vaglum, 1993; Sam, 1998; Wikan, 1999). Some support the findings discussed in the previous section, for example that second-generation girls and women tend to lean more towards ethnic preservation although not explaining specifically what. There has also been research on parental influence on the child's education (Fekjær & Leirvik, 2011). The literature reveals that while there is research on the Vietnamese community pertaining to gender, most addresses health issues.

4 Methodology and Research Design

When it comes to choosing the appropriate methodology, it is important to consider the nature of the research question. This chapter aims to elaborate on the chosen research design in an effort to maintain transparency. Since the research attempts to explore how Vietnamese immigrants in Norway perceive gender and how migration impacts this perspective (particularly the notion of womanhood), the qualitative methodology is deemed as appropriate. Furthermore, the project is suited for a qualitative approach because I am investigating how participants understand and create meaning of an event and/or concept (Creswell, 2013, 2014). My research is then linked to the *interpretative philosophical approach*, which Neuman (2009, p. 102) defines as a way to understand social life and "how people construct meaning in a natural setting." This is relevant to my proposed research question because I am trying to understand how my study participants perceived their gender identities and norms within the Vietnamese and Norwegian culture. Interpretivism is relevant because it acknowledges that people try to understand the world around them and subsequently, develop multiple, subjective meanings that are directed towards certain things (Creswell, 2014, p. 8). Since the participants I engaged with are attempting to create the meaning of gender from two different cultures and are from two different generations, this is especially important. At the core of this study is namely how they perceive themselves and how they have constructed their meanings.

In this chapter, I will endeavour to explain why the research methods I employed were appropriate for my research. In conjunction with this, I will provide an account the process of data collection, process of data analysis, reflect on my role as a researcher and the challenges I encountered. I will also shed light on the ethical considerations before, during, and after the data collection process. Lastly, I will also introduce the participants of the research project.

4.1 Research Method

In order to better gauge the meaning of gender for the Vietnamese immigrant women, I decided to use face-to-face interviews as a primary source of data collection. This constitutes the primary data of the research. Interviews allow researchers to gather data by listening to the individual informants and attempting to understand their point of view (Krueger & Casey, 2009; Yin, 2011). With interviews, I can record and transcribe participants' interviews to textually analyze gender perceptions and interactions between the first- and

second-generation participants. By using a pre-design interview guide, I had a script "that structure[d] the course of the interview more or less tightly" (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 130). This way of collecting data presents the researcher with the ability to more or less structured, allowing the researcher to adapt to the situation or responses rather than following a strict guideline (Yin, 2011).

The strategy I employed was semi-structured interviews because I could then redirect my questions in response to what the participants replied and gather more details that would otherwise have been lost in my original interview questions. The interview method also encourages the researcher to be non-directive and to assume a less dominating role. By taking a non-directive approach, the researcher does not guide the participants to a specific answer but allowing them to vocalize their own opinions on how they perceive the world (Krueger & Casey, 2009, p. 3; Yin, 2011, p. 136). By taking a step back and allowing the participants to control their own story as naturally as possible, I could obtain meaningful accounts of their life and experiences with gender. Being non-directive also respects the participants right to refrain from answering questions that they are uncomfortable with. This was especially important because the research question implies a somewhat sensitive and private topic. Questions about conflict between mothers and daughters when it comes to the cultural transmission of gender norms can be interpreted by the participants as controversial.

4.2 Process of Data Collection

In this section, I will discuss the recruitment of participants and the interview process. I will briefly address the challenges I experienced when attempting to set up the interviews and how I experienced the atmosphere while interviewing the participants. The interviews provide an opportunity to analyze the relationships between first- and second-generation participants and their meaning of gender. This makes it important as a primary resource for a qualitative research design based on understanding people's meaning of a particular concept or phenomenon.

4.2.1 Recruitment Process

When considering the fieldwork location, I decided the fieldwork would be conducted in Bergen, Norway. Norway is an interesting location, both because it received a number of Vietnamese migrants after the Vietnam War, but also because it is culturally very different from Vietnam – especially when it comes to gender norms. The selection of Bergen as the focal point of recruitment was because it hosts a reasonably large community of Vietnamese

immigrants which has been growing steadily over the past four decades. To begin the recruitment process, I shared the research proposal with a Vietnamese immigrant living in Bergen with the help of one of my professor. After looking over my proposal, the person agreed to be my contact person to the Vietnamese community in Bergen.

The contact person and I then set up a meeting where we introduced ourselves, discussed the project and how she could assist me in recruiting participants. Since the participants I wanted to recruit were of two different generations, I gave her two different sets of inclusion criteria. For the first-generation participant, I said that they needed to have grown up in Vietnam and moved to Norway. They would then have had to live in Norway for a long enough time to understand Norwegian culture including the lifestyle and the language. Furthermore, they would have to have children; more specifically, it was required that the first-generation participants had raised a daughter into adulthood or were currently raising a daughter living at home. I did not set any criteria when it came to the reason for migration, i.e. my study participants could have left before, during, or after the war and for different reasons such as economic opportunities, seeking refuge, or family reunification.

The first-generation participants did not have to leave Vietnam or arrive in Norway at any specific time. The criteria for the second-generation were as follows: I set the age limit for the second-generation to be above the age of 25. This threshold was selected because those above this age would have already gone through crucial periods in their life that shaped them as a person. Moreover, it would make sure they were independent of their parents or caregiver. They needed to have been either born in Norway or raised in Norway for most of their lives. This ensured that they understood Norwegian culture, having grown up and participated in Norwegian society. Additionally, the first- and second-generation participants did not have to be related as I planned on employing the snowballing or chaining strategy which implies that informants can identify and introduce me to other informants relevant to my research study (Creswell, 2013, p. 158). I intended to have a sample size of 12 total participants, six from the first-generation and six from the second-generation.

With the criteria outlined, the contact person got in touch with other members of the Vietnamese community, asking if they would like to participate in the research project. As mentioned earlier – even though I had planned on utilizing the snowball or chain strategy – the contact person managed to find all the first-generation participants for me. She also asked them if I could interview their daughters and I was informed that they had agreed that I could. Though it was not intended for the participants to be related, I found that this was also

the most successful way to recruit second-generation Vietnamese women as my contact person knew more first-generation women than second-generation participants. Over the course of approximately two weeks, from the end of August to mid-September in 2017, she managed to connect me with my intended sample size.

The first-generation participants agreed to be interviewed and gave the contact person permission to relay their information to me. Scheduling the interviews was a challenging process. It seemed the most effective way to reach the participants was to call them, but when I managed to get them on the phone – despite agreeing to be interviewed – a few of the participants told me that they had a busy schedule and were unsure if they could continue with the interviews. When prompted about their daughters, some participants stated the same reasons and asked for some time to look through their schedule, asserting that they would call me back. If I missed their calls, I would call them back as soon as I could but for those whom I did not hear from within a week and a half, I contacted them instead. I explained that my schedule was free and I could go wherever they found most convenient for them and whenever they had time. There were a couple that I had to call multiple times as they were unavailable but fortunately, they all agreed to a time and date to be interviewed.

When the interview with the first-generation was concluding, I asked again for permission to interview their daughters. Most gave me their daughters phone numbers but requested that I give them time to talk to their daughters about the interview. Following the same process as earlier, if I did not receive any confirmation or information by the end of a week and a half, I would call them again to ask if I could contact their daughters. When they gave me permission, I used the same tactic of sending a text message to introduce myself with the intention of calling if they did not respond. This was not a problem as all the second-generation participants replied to my messages or asked me to call them to set up a meeting date. Though the second-generation participants were busy, I experienced less difficulties in setting up meetings with them.

4.2.2 Interview Process

The interview process took place from the end of September to the end of October of 2017. All of my participants lived in the city of Bergen and therefore, the interviews took place in various locations within or at the outskirts of Bergen. The participants were also interviewed individually. Some participants asked me to meet them at their home, their workplace, or in cafes around the city. On the phone, and once again before starting the interviews, I informed

the participants that I would bring a recording device with me and with the exception of one, they were very mindful in helping me find a quiet space for me to interview them. According to Creswell (2013, pp. 165–166), in order to have an accurate audiotaping, it is important the interview location is free from distraction.

The interviews averaged about one hour each, with the shortest being around 35 minutes and the longest about three hours. The interviews went rather smoothly because all of the participants were very welcoming of me even though some were reserved. The participants appeared to be enthusiastic once we were able to meet; they were particularly happy that I knew how to speak Vietnamese. This undoubtedly improved the validity of the response. One of the participants, (the first one interviewed from the first-generation) was very reserved and vague in her answers, which resulted in my shortest interview. She also seemed to be looking for my confirmation in what she was telling me about because every once in a while, she would ask if I agreed with what she was saying. The rest, however, seemed to become easily comfortable with me, at times making jokes. The atmosphere was, for the most part, very friendly and relaxed. The only time it seemed that the participants were having issues answering questions was when they had to think far back into their past or remember whether or not they faced conflict with each other. There were a couple of instances where the beginning of the interview process was uncomfortable because two of the participants' husbands were present. However, this problem was resolved by the husbands introducing themselves to me and leaving to another room when we began the interviews. Once the interviews were in progress, the conversations went smoothly. I struggled a little in the beginning but as I progressed with each interview, my knowledge of the topic began to expand and the interviews became better. The success of the interviews in terms of yielding extensive data made it unnecessary to conduct any follow-up interviews.

4.3 Process of Data Analysis

The first step in preparing for data analysis is making sure that there is data that has been recorded and transcribed, and notes reflecting on the interviews (Creswell, 2014; Skovdal & Cornish, 2015). As previously stated, the data was generated through interviews and all interviews were recorded apart from one interview, which was typed out as we had the interview. The recordings were made with a Sony IC Recorder and then uploaded to a USB drive with password protection. When it came to organizing the information, I used thematic analysis described by Skovdal and Cornish (2015, p. 164) as a way to "index and organize your data into theme, with the aim of unpacking a story within in the data."

The two interview guides I created for both the first- and second-generation participants were similar as the questions fell under three main categories which served as my guiding points. In order to identify the themes, I manually color-coded the interviews based on recurring subjects which eventually built up to the four main themes discussed in the empirical chapters: the perception of gender in Vietnam and Norway, the impact these gender norms have on their daily life, the cultural transmission of womanhood, and the prevalence of intergenerational conflict due to the transmissions.

4.4 Quality Assurance and Reflexivity

The role of a researcher is important in order to create meaning from the data presented. In a qualitative research, a researcher's responsibility is to generate and interpret the data in a manner that ensures its validity and reliability. Creswell (2014, p. 201) defines qualitative validity as the procedures the researcher implements to check the accuracy of their research. Reliability is defined as the consistency of the researcher's approach across different researchers and projects (ibid). Put differently, "If an inference were to be tested repeatedly, the closeness of these results (on average) to the true value would capture the validity of the test. The closeness of the test results *to each other* would capture the precision of the test" with precision being another term for reliability (Gerring, 2012, p. 82).

To ensure validity and reliability, the researcher should provide an account of what research already exists on the same topic (Ch. 3), details of the data collection process (Ch. 4.2.), how they have managed the data analysis (Ch. 4.3), and reveal any potential biases, background information of the researcher that may or may not impact the research outcome so that the audience can judge the quality of the research (Creswell, 2014, p. 186; Patton, 1999). The researcher should also be aware of their positionality when they are interviewing participants because in qualitative interviews, there is a "clear power asymmetry between the researcher and the subject" (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 33). This requires the researcher to reflect on their own involvement in the data collection process and about how the participants perceive the researcher or why they respond the way they did (Skovdal & Cornish, 2015, p. 91). As this is the case, I have attempted to be as transparent as possible to the research and the research participants about who I am and why I am interested in the project.

As I have told my participants, my interest in this topic is due to my own experiences with intergenerational conflict due to the cultural transmission of what my mother thought was the correct way for a woman to behave. As a second-generation Vietnamese myself, I was often

corrected on how I spoke, dressed, to how I sat or when I can hang out with friends, and how long I can be out. As I was growing up, this led to many frustrations and arguments because we tended to disagree about these ideals. As I hardly had any Vietnamese friends to share the struggle with, I was curious about what other second-generation Vietnamese girls and women have experienced. Therefore, when I began this project, I already had the preconception that there was a level of intergenerational conflicts between mothers and daughters. However, while the participants saw that there were cultural differences between them and their parents, they did not have appear to have the same level of conflict that I had envisioned. Initially, I was puzzled and as the first interviews went on, I attempted to redirect the questions to conflict because I was unconvinced. I soon realized that if I pushed the matter too much, then it would be guiding the participants to say what I wanted them to say. It is also possible that because of the rather conservative nature of the Vietnamese community, they were not keen to revealing conflict to strangers (Knudsen, 1990, p. 155). Furthermore, it would have been futile to insist they talk about conflict between mothers and daughters if they just did not feel that they had any. That was one of the negative ways I recognized my positionality but when I realized what I was doing, I stopped and learned how to go into the interviews with less expectations.

There are certain advantages in my position as Vietnamese when interviewing the participants. I felt that our similarity in nationality helped some of the participants feel more comfortable in discussing cultural conflict with me when I gave them examples of what I would experience. Furthermore, I believe that nationality and my age, when compared to the first-generation, made them feel like they wanted to help me as a few of them said that they wanted to "help out a fellow Vietnamese native" and because I was young, they wanted to take care of me. For the second-generation participants, I feel that being a student and sharing some of the same second-generation experiences, led to many of them feeling willing to share with me their stories. I do feel that because I am a stranger to the community, this had the very real potential of creating a distance between the participants and myself when it came to sharing information about conflict. Despite this possibility, I still feel as if the communications between the participants and I were rather relaxed even if some were reserved about me.

4.4.1 Challenges

As I already went through in 4.2.1., one of the main challenges I had was scheduling the interviews because some of the participants appeared to have a change of heart. In the end though, I believe that my availability and willingness to work around their schedule was a determining factor that allowed us to set up a meeting. One challenge I faced was the language

barrier. While I am and can speak Vietnamese, my Vietnamese is not comparable to that of a native speaker since I was raised in the U.S. This was easily remedied for the second-generation as they understood English and if they didn't understand the question, I would elaborate or if they were unsure of the English word, they would say it in Vietnamese, as some concepts are not translatable into English. For the first-generation, they did not have a strong grasp of English as their daughters. In order to make the interview accessible to them, I contacted a friend in the U.S. and asked if he could translate the first-generation interview guide, which he agreed to. We then set up a time for him to coach me on how to say some of the main concepts in Vietnamese. He warned me to be careful how I asked my questions as he saw some of them as particularly sensitive and that they could make the participants closed off. When I spoke to the participants however, this did not seem to be a problem. They seemed very willing to answer the questions despite their sensitivity. I did notice that the first-generation were rather brief when talking about the reason behind their move to Norway and often did not expand on the struggles they had when they arrived. The second-generation, however, were more open about these types of questions.

All the interviews conducted in Vietnamese were translated into English, which was another challenge. Many concepts were difficult to translate into English and some had multiple different meanings. In order to remedy this problem, I would record myself saying either the phrase or the word that the participant said, send it to my friend and he would send me back the most accurate English translation. This assuaged my fear that the English translation would lose the original meaning of the participants as my friend had lived in Vietnam for a long time before coming to the U.S.

4.5 Ethical Considerations

Concerning the practical considerations of ethics, a research proposal was required to be sent to the Norwegian Center for Research Data (NSD). After going through a rigorous editing process, the project was approved by the NSD. Among the documents submitted to NSD was a consent form that detailed the project, two interview guides—one for the first and second-generation. Before starting the interviews, I would go through the consent form with all the participants, answer their questions about it, and offer a copy or provide them a copy if they asked for it. As detailed in the consent form, I explained that the interviews would be recorded and transcribed to better analyze their responses. When it came to asking the participants to sign the consent form, I made it clear to them that they did not have to sign the form and that if

they do, they can revoke their consent later in the process. By giving them this explanation, I presented the participants with a choice to partake in the study or not (Creswell, 2014, p. 97).

One of the main ethical dilemmas of this project was the anonymity aspect. Anonymity is important because it protects the privacy of the participants (ibid, p. 98). This is because certain ideas about what the participants believe in or their activities should be considered as private based on their "cultural background, religious belief, age, gender and/or social class" (Davies, 1999, p. 51). As a minority group in Bergen, Norway, there was a possibility of them being identifiable within their community. As the question was based on their Vietnamese background, information about their cultural identity could not be completely hidden. This was solved, pragmatically, by erasing all identifications such as their name, occupation and using age range rather than specific age when writing about individuals. The participants were given Vietnamese pseudonyms to hide their real identity, as can be seen in the chart below (Table 1 and Table 2).

Another issue of anonymity was that the daughters were related to the first-generation Vietnamese participants, but this was solved by not grouping them into mother-daughter pairs. However, despite the steps to assure their anonymity for the public, the Vietnamese community is still a small community in Bergen. While I am bound to protect their identities, they are still free to talk to each other about their interview experience and about me. This was the case as some of my participants would already know who I had interviewed. In such cases, I would just inform them that I could not reveal who I had interviewed if they asked me questions about other participants directly.

In providing the participants with a pseudonym, I chose names beginning with the letter T for the first-generation participants and the letter L for the second-generation. The names were assigned randomly. This way of distributing names makes easier to identify which participant belongs to which generation. This information will still be supplemented with either F.G. for first-generation and S.G. for second-generation after their pseudonyms. The way the participants are ordered are based on the chronological order they were interviewed. For the first-generation participants, I decided to refrain from providing their marital status because it varies and I do not want to implicate the participants with gossip if they are divorced. This is also the reason why I did not include the martial status of the second-generation participants. I also avoided inserting how many sons the first-generation had. Since this research is mainly about mothers and daughters, it is not important to know how many sons they have, only if they have sons. I also did not include the gender or numbers of children the second-generation

participants had because we hardly spoke about their own children. I chose to omit this information to offer one less way that participants can be identified within their community.

Table 1: Brief Introduction to First-Generation Participants

First-Generation Participants	Years lived in Norway	Current or Previous Spouses Ethnicity	How Many Daughters?	Sons?
Thao	39	Vietnamese	1	Yes
Thuy	38	Vietnamese	1	Yes
Tien	34	Vietnamese	3	Yes
Tuyet	31	Vietnamese	2	Yes
Trinh	37	Vietnamese	1	Yes
Trang	35	Vietnamese	2	Yes

Table 2: Brief Introduction to Second-Generation Participants

Second-Generation Participants	Place of Birth	Approximate Age at Interview	Partner Ethnicity (if they have a partner)	Children?
Lan	Vietnam	≈ 40	Vietnamese	Yes
Ly	Norway	≈ 25	Norwegian	No
Linh	Vietnam	≈ 40	Norwegian	Yes
Loan	Vietnam	≈ 45	Vietnamese	Yes
Lieu	Norway	≈ 25	Norwegian	No
Le	Vietnam	≈ 45	Vietnamese	Yes

5 The Migration Process

In this chapter, I will discuss experiences first-generation Vietnamese women had leaving Vietnam and settling in Norway. The migration process will explore the reasons behind their departure from Vietnam, why they decided to come to Norway, how they settled into Norway, and how the Vietnamese community is thriving now. This is relevant to the research question because it helps construct a narrative of the participants' experiences that implicitly describe the acculturation process. The migration process is important because it explains how the participants' old lives were disrupted by their decision to leave Vietnam and how they navigated the host of new opportunities and challenges in the Norwegian society. The purpose of this chapter, then, is to lay a foundation the analyses of the following chapters that deal more explicitly with notions and perspectives of gender, cultural transmission of gender norms in the context of the migratory experiences, and the extent to which intergenerational conflict emerged.

5.1 Leaving Vietnam, Coming to Norway

For many of the first-generation Vietnamese women, the main reason they left Vietnam was because of the consequences of conflict in Vietnam during the 1970s/80s. According to Sandnes (2017, p. 155), the first Vietnamese immigrants arrived to Norway in 1975, after the Vietnam War. Most of my participants cited the Vietnam War as the push factor. Thuy (F.G.) arriving in Norway a few years after 1975 stated that the *"political climate was communist and people didn't agree with them and didn't want to live in there so they left."* This was due to the oppressive nature of the communist regime who had no problem cracking down on those who would question the party's legitimacy (Druke, 2013, p. 211; Lee, 2016, p. 115). Additionally – even though the war had ended – soldiers who were associated with Americans were jailed causing immense suffering for the families involved (Nguyen, 2016, p. 142). This was the case for Tuyet (F.G.), who recounted:

> *"I lived in South Vietnam, by Saigon [and] the situation there, my dad had to go to war…. My two brothers were soldiers and had to go to jail. The soldiers who were American soldiers[7], they had a hard time finding a job, a future, here [Vietnam]. So on*

[7] This was meant as they were working with American soldiers, not that they were actual American soldiers.

the forms[8] filled out, they saw you were associated with Americans, and then you were barred from education, work as well."

The unforgiving nature of the communist regime made it so that the conditions were repressive to the participants and/or their families. As this was the case, some left so that they could pursue a better future for themselves and their children – if they had children at the time. Trang (F.G.) felt that *"It was restricted because I couldn't have my independence, I-I had to have something so that I could have my own independence, to be able to care for my children."* When she left, she was about 30 and a mother of four who were relatively young at the time. For most of the participants, the average age when they first arrived to Norway was between 19 and 21. They all arrived with children, with the exception of two, who came to Bergen childless.

Initially, I worried that these questions about why they left Vietnam would make the participants uncomfortable. This because the Vietnamese society is marked by a conservative behavior. Problems or conflicts are private issues and are dealt with in the family or close circles of friends (Knudsen, 1991, pp. 22–23). However, with the exception of one who was visibly unconfident, the others answered in a matter-of-factly manner. The answers were usually very straightforward and short, not because they did not want to talk about it, but because this was a situation of the past. All the first-generation participants I interviewed have now resided in Norway for about 30 to 40 years. As for the second-generation participants, from stories told by their parents or their own memories, they all called their parents refugees or "boat refugees" and emphasized that their parents were either targeted by the government and wanted to escape the communist country or the general suffering they would otherwise have to endure.

The highest amount of refugees ended up settling in the U.S., followed by Canada, France and Australia, with these four places being highest on the participants preference list (Knudsen, 1990, p. 156; Pelaud, 2014, p. 9). The reasons why some chose to come to Norway varied. For some, it was not the planned destination, for others, it was not the planned *final* destination. Tuyet (F.G.) told me that in the beginning, *"there was only a few hundred [Vietnamese] people [in Norway] … not a lot of people wanted to come to Norway, they would have preferred America."* Presumably, this was due to the relationship the U.S. had with the Vietnamese people when they were at war. Many of the participants had initially chosen the U.S. but because there were many applicants, the waiting list was unbearable. Lan (S.G.) informed me

[8] By forms, she means that everyone in Vietnam had to fill out some identification form to document the Vietnamese people.

that, *"We actually applied to America but the—we had to wait very long so my uncle read about Norway and had never heard about Norway but it sounded very okay so we, uh, decided to come to Norway."* Linh (S.G.) said that her father *"chose Norway [because no one had heard of it, because] it would be easier to get me and my mom over. And so that's what he chose and why he chose Norway. That's why we ended up here."*

Thuy's (F.G.) family left Norway and went to a different country because her husband at the time did not adapt well to the Norwegian life. She says that her husband was jealous of her because:

> *"When he came here, he picked up Norwegian slower than I did. In Vietnam, he had a higher position [in work], respected, so once you come here, you want to find a job immediately. So he worked with delivery. I worked and went to school, but he didn't like that I went out. Any interaction, he was jealous of; that's because he didn't like that I had a better job than he did, with better wages. He didn't like that and it was hard to swallow. He wasn't very happy either because of that. So, he was often jealous, argumentative and wanted to pick up and move elsewhere [to a different country]. So we moved the whole family but I came back."*

Similarly, Le (S.G.) recalled that her family also struggled with the same feelings of inadequacy and wanted to move to another country. She said that:

> *"It was hard in the beginning, I could tell that they struggle a lot and they were looking for all those things, all those countries to move to in America [or] Paris. They were looking around for their options to see where they could go but it turns out that when, you know, when they realized that they were going to stay here, they felt more adaptive to Norwegian society."*

When I asked about at which point she thought they decided that they could live in Norway, she told me, *"I think after… two years? They were finally settled and my dad got a job and then my mom got a job and that's when, you know, they were realizing that 'We're going to stay here.'"*

At the most basic level, transitioning from a warm country like Vietnam to a colder country like Norway was a shock for many of the newly arrived refugees as some jokingly explained. But the problem of arriving to a foreign country as a refugee was that they were very unprepared. *"When I first came, I saw that it was strange, it was really cold, the environment was not*

familiar to me so it was hard. But, slowly, I saw that I was starting to familiarize myself with it. The lifestyle is also different from Vietnam" (Trang, F.G.). Elaborating on the differences, Thuy (F.G.) explained that the social climate was just as different as the weather between the two countries,

> *"Back home, it was very hot and pretty busy, lots of people, but when you went out, it was easy to start conversations. When I first came here, it was pretty different. When I moved here, there were very little Vietnamese people and where I live, there was hardly any people. Even then, people weren't as approachable [in Norway]. The store used to only open during work hours so it was hard to even buy groceries. Even in town, there were very little people, it was pretty dead, boring back then. Especially since all the shops, restaurants, only opened during regular work hours, there wasn't much to do."*

In sum, there were different reasons why the participants decided to leave Vietnam, but for all, the main push factor was the impact the warring nation at the time had on their livelihood. The pull factors were compounded, including being able to lead a better life, escape war, find employment, and a better future for themselves and/or their children. At the time, there was mass emigration from Vietnam and in this decision to move, the participants and their family altered their life course. As such, by going to Norway – whether planned or not – they have encountered a different political, cultural, and social environment. The decision to migrate would shape and possibly altered how the Vietnamese families were to live their lives.

5.2 The Vietnamese Women's Experience with Integration

The participants all exhibited that they were satisfied with their current life in Norway, despite initial difficulties. As Tuyet (F.G.) laughingly told me, *"Everyone has to change, from the lifestyle. We have to integrate, every day, we have to integrate."* This process, however, was not particularly easy, especially because the newly arrived immigrants were far away from home and did not understand the language. According to Lieu (S.G.), who said of her parents:

> *"the time they came to Norway, the view on immigration and refugees were better than it is today. More focused on helping people and so, so I feel like they mention there were activities, programs to help them get a house and support them to start their lives."*

A couple of the first-generation participants shared this sentiment. Trinh (F.G.) said that, *"there were offices that were around to help and translate. I started going to school for the language and once I knew a little of the language, I could start thinking [about what to do next]."* Trang

(F.G.) explained that *"From the issue of health, to going to school, to getting a job. They had an office for all of that."*

Since there were organizations that provided rigorous support, the first-generation participants were able to find work, which facilitated learning of the new language. Tuyet (F.G.) participants jokingly told me that *"Especially with the language of Norwegian, I need to go to work so I can remember it! In my head, I don't think in Norwegian."* However, this is also reinforcing the idea that working with Norwegian natives provides a gateway to better integration into the society. This could be seen with Tien (F.G.) when she states *"I often interact with young Norwegians when I teach at a Norwegian school. I… I work with them and I feel that if I do something that's considered very Vietnamese, then they won't understand me very well."* The key to integration is to be understood by the Norwegians and to understand the Norwegians. Thus, the desire to integrate into Norwegian society is shown in their desire to make use of the services provided to them, learning the language and working in Norwegian society; this way, they were able to better understand how the society functioned and could blend in more easily.

The data also suggest that three of the second-generation Vietnamese women found their mother to integrate into Norwegian society better than their fathers. One of the mothers agreed with their daughters on this. Again, the interviews were conducted individually despite the participants being mother-daughter pairs. According to this then, half of the families found that women integrated more easily and were less traditional than the first-generation Vietnamese men were.

One of the first-generation Vietnamese immigrant made this statement to me that *"As a woman, we are better matched for adapting to new life than Vietnamese men"*. The reason she gave was that, at the time, her husband was much more traditional than she was. He could not stand that she was able to find a better job than he did and was always jealous of how easily she picked up the language and the lifestyle. Additionally, he was not as respected as he was in Vietnam and they ended up moving out of Norway for a bit but she preferred to live in Norway and thus, moved back. For the daughters, when prompted about whether or not their parents attempted to raise them with traditional, Vietnamese values for women, three of the daughters said that their father was, perhaps, the more traditional one. Linh (S.G.) told me that

> *"I cannot say any of them raised me to be traditional. Maybe my dad a little bit. My dad, I'm not sure, but I wanted to go to the karate and he said like… uhm… 'You could protect yourself, can learn some tricks' but he wasn't so keen for me to start the kung-*

fu or karate. He wanted me to take the piano lessons, singing lessons, I think some of them are a little bit traditional…."

From this comparison, Linh (S.G.) assessed that her father wanted her to play instruments or do things that are seen as traditionally feminine but did not make the same offer to her brother, if he made any offer at all. Lieu (S.G.), when asked how her parents perceived women in Norway, she stated that, while it was difficult to assess, she felt her parents were becoming more accepting of the differences between Vietnamese women and Norwegian women. She thought that her father was a bit behind but increasingly tolerant of it. When I asked if her parents adapted well, she stated that:

"I think my mother adapted better than my dad because… I think it definitely helps that she's more outgoing and she learned the language, she worked as an interpreter so it's like, she's good at speaking Norwegian, better than my dad and she has like, she has Norwegian friends and yeah, who she would go on vacation with or go on walks with, so I think they're pretty well integrated."

Le (S.G.), alongside the other two second-generation Vietnamese women, posited that her father was stricter in reinforcing gender roles in her family. She also said that her family, when they first came here, thought about moving to another country because *"my dad used to be a very successful businessman in Vietnam, you know, so when he came here, he saw a wall of difficulties, that he was facing and I think he couldn't handle it… he saw that 'I had to find some way out'"* but after about two years *"my dad got a job then my mom got a job and that's when they were realizing that 'We're going to stay here.'"*

Conversely, there was one participant, Ly (S.G.), who believed her father adapted to the Norwegian lifestyle easier than her mother and this was less about gender reinforcement than it was about being accepting of the Norwegian cultural norms that she and her siblings had picked up. She used the example of if they did something the parents did not like then, *"my dad was the calm one, so he would sit down and try to talk some sense, but my mom,"* she laughs at this point, *"she didn't talk, she was screaming!"* This was her way of explaining that it was harder for her mom to accept her children's changes into the Norwegian lifestyle.

As these are pairs of mothers and daughters, half of the family saw that the first-generation Vietnamese women were more capable of adapting into the Norwegian culture, being less traditional than the father. While there was an exception to this assessment, it only amounted to one. The main indicator of successful integration into Norwegian society was the proactive

way the women presented themselves in the Norwegian society and how quickly they grasped the language. There also seemed to be only two cases where the men were having a hard time because of their positions in a new place.

5.3 Vietnamese Community in Bergen

This section of the chapter will concentrate on the Vietnamese community in Bergen based on the accounts of both the first and second-generation participants. It will start with how the Vietnamese community was helpful in assisting the refugees transition to life in a new country, then go on to talking about the growth of the Vietnamese community and afterwards, talk about whether or not they have contact with each other through communal events or otherwise. There will also be a section about the Vietnamese community that is centered on how the participants perceive the closeness of the community. All of these elements shed additional light on the acculturation process for the participants in this research and the specific challenges they encountered.

5.3.1 Vietnamese Community: Helpful with the Integration Process

Aside from the resources provided from the Norwegian state, the development of a distinct Vietnamese community was important. The creation of this community began with their shared experience. The two generations of women I interviewed – while some were not yet born or could not remember the move – shared the experience of leaving their home country for what they deemed as better opportunities in Norway. Another shared experience was the trip over to Norway. All the participants talked about arriving to Norway on a boat with many other Vietnamese people. Trinh (F.G.) explained that when she first came here, *"I just went with my little sister, so just us two, but on the boat on the way over, there was a lot of other people and we view them as family as well."* When telling me about her parents' migration to Norway, Ly (S.G.) said that by traveling together, she deemed that there was a large Vietnamese community, saying *"yeah, it was a big Vietnamese community [because] they travelled a lot with Vietnamese people here in Norway."* Lieu (S.G.), while not agreeing with there being a big community when her parents first came, said that:

> *"Yes, they were picked up by a Norwegian boat alongside with a lot of other Vietnamese people as well. So they sort of formed their community, I guess, when they got here. So often when we're out, I see—my mom will still point like 'Oh, we were in the same boat' so, yeah, they did have people they knew."*

In this shared experience, some were able to build a relationship with their fellow migrants and create a community for the Vietnamese population. Part of a smooth integration process was that they did not have to completely conform to the Norwegian way of life as they were still able to retain some of their own cultural upbringing by forming a community that helped and support newly arrived immigrants.

In the beginning, the population of Vietnamese people in Norway was very small. According to Lan (S.G.), she laughed, telling me that her family *"were the first ones. So my uncles and aunts, they came here, they had a sort of class, about three months only to learn to speak Norwegian and after that they had to be interpreters and help other Vietnamese. So we were actually the first ones that came to Bergen."* A couple of the participants recalled that when they first came, under reunification with the husband, there were people who were able to help them settle in, that *"there was a community who helped him and told him where to go, where to get help and gave food or clothing and some tips because it was quite cold here. Yeah, so, they made friends in Norway"* (Linh, S.G.).

Le (S.G.) remembered migrating to Norway, she summarized the community she remembered as a child,

> *"they taught us where the school was and all the necessary … where we could find the hospital. They taught me how to take the bus. The first time I took it to school because for three months we were living in town at a motel, you know, with all the Vietnamese people that just came to Norway. And then after three months, we got our flat a little bit outside of Bergen so I had to take the bus every day and there was [someone] that was helping me all the time."*

Overall, what Lieu (S.G.) says for her parents, *"just being, I mean, they came here with other people so I think it's a good thing to be more people to handle the situation and help each other"*, is something that is applicable to all the first-generation migrants. From these statements, it becomes clear that part of the transition to live in Norway was made a bit easier by having those who underwent the same experience of leaving Vietnam and living in the same place.

5.3.2 Growth of the Vietnamese Community

As previously mentioned, the Vietnamese community in Bergen was initially quite small but has since grown. Some of the participants posited that the growth happened because family

members came over or others married people from Norway. Tuyet (F.G.) estimated that there were probably *"only several hundred [Vietnamese] people"* when she first arrived. While the growth is not rapid, Trinh (F.G.) suggests that "*Of course, it's slowly being populated with Vietnamese people. And the next generations are born here so then the number of Vietnamese people are increasing.*" Tien (F.G.), rather than stating those reasons say that the growth is *"because Vietnamese people have come here now for other different reasons."* Since she came to Norway as a refugee and because of the family reunification application, presumably, the "reasons" she mentions are most likely for those who have come over to seek economic opportunities or for political or social reasons.

5.3.3 Communal Events for the Vietnamese Community

To explore the extent to which the Vietnamese community collectively attempted to preserve traditional cultural traditions or embrace new ones, I asked if the community had organized cultural events. Thuy (F.G) told me that "*We do, we do. We have Tet*[9]*, Christmas, and meetings to celebrate our independence*[10]*. We did it initially because we really miss home so it helped."* This is a sentiment that all the participants shared but as time went on and they were establishing a life in Bergen, the reasons changed. Thao (F.G.) said that *"Whomever has the time, they come to those events"* and Tuyet (F.G.) elaborates that it's *"for the kids so they can understand the Vietnamese tradition. For the adults, it's for everyone to reunite and catch up because everyone is busy."* Le (S.G.) echoed the sentiments of the holiday events being for the kids because, as someone who helps puts on the events for the Vietnamese celebrations, she states that:

> *"I do sometimes arrange all these things because I don't want my children to forget they are Vietnamese, that in the end, they're Vietnamese. When you see me—my colleagues, they would say 'Oh, you're Norwegian, you speak Norwegian perfectly' but I look Vietnamese and I am Vietnamese so I want to teach my children, they are Vietnamese."*

Even for the second-generation Vietnamese women, they want to preserve their culture by teaching the third-generations about the holidays that are important in Vietnam. Not all of the events that the community organizes are connected to Vietnam. As Trinh (F.G.) puts it, when asked if the community is close knit:

[9] Vietnamese New Years.
[10] Independence here can mean two things: 1) Independence from Vietnam or 2) Independence as in the national reunification day for Vietnam on 30th April.

"*of course, there are people who are close to each other but that doesn't mean that the community is all close to each other. Take, for example, me. My family is priority so we have family events and a few friends, one, two family friends and then there's my job, so its hard to open rooms for more friends*."

And so, in the community, *"Those with similar lifestyles would meet with each other like when I go to church, I see other Vietnamese people, those who go to the temple, people would see each other"* (Tien, F.G.). Trang (F.G.) summed it up really well when talking about all the events that are held for the Vietnamese community, "*When I first came, there wasn't much but now, there's events from the religious group for us Vietnamese people. We have it all! There's a lot of Vietnamese holidays, so we have all the events in Norway now. It's a good community."* Even though the community is not always celebrating together, the impression from these interviews is that the community is thriving, both publicly and in their private lives.

5.3.4 A Community that is too Involved

While the Vietnamese community in Bergen provided the participants with a support system that the Norwegian society could not, there comes a point where community involvement becomes too much. The involvement starts becoming a way to police each other on what they deemed appropriate for the people in their community. Lieu (S.G.) explains that from her experience that there is criticism within the Vietnamese community if someone does not behave a certain way, saying:

> *"I remember people saying, 'Someone will see you and they'll tell your parents and every Vietnamese person in Bergen knows each other… there was the fear that it could happen [being told on]. I guess it's more frowned upon when they see a Vietnamese person doing it [smoking, drinking, partying] and [they] make it their business to let everybody know."*

Linh (S.G.) corroborated the explanation by saying that she used to hear some Vietnamese women,

> *"compare each other and talk behind their back, 'this woman did this and did that.' I know my mom wasn't so popular amongst some of the Vietnamese people because she was so free and they didn't like it because Vietnamese women shouldn't be… she's divorced and that's not something you should do…. I think many people look down on*

her because she's divorced. She's independent and they're not used to women having such a strong sense of self."

While these two participants expressed that this did not impact them or their family in any way, their recollection show that the community is prone to gossip about how individuals are behaving and at times, can be used as a way monitor what one does, especially, with the threat of telling the parents. Other participants such as, Trinh (F.G.) and Lan (S.G.), talked about how they did not like that many in the community focused on appearances, *"When I meet [Vietnamese] people, they always commented on how I looked, 'Oh, you're thin' or 'You've put on weight.' [They said it] to other people too and that always bothered me,"* Lan laughs at this point, continuing that though they say boys should be muscular, particular attention was paid to the girls *"I think they mostly notice the girls, that they should be thin and pretty, not eat too much."*

Certainly, this could be ways the community control the appearances that young girls – and to some extent, young boys – are supposed to emulate, especially with the aforementioned gossiping about what is appropriate or not. However, these types of community involvement can also take on a more invasive form. For two of the participants, Linh (S.G.) and Loan (S.G.), they felt that the community, particularly extended family members, put pressure on women to give birth to a son. Linh (S.G.) told me that she remembered one of her friends' family kept pressuring her to have a boy every time she had a girl and were only satisfied once she did have a boy because the community believed that women *"should have children and that they should have boys."*

5.1. Conclusion

This chapter have shed light on the reasons why some Vietnamese left Vietnam to settle in Norway and how they viewed their settlement in the new country. This serves as an important analytical pillar, providing a context through excerpts of life narratives that ultimately help us understand how participants perceive gender values. The findings show that the women believe they have integrated well and with half the second-generation participants observing that their mother integrated better than their fathers. When it comes to the community – though they were helpful in supporting the participants in the process of settling down in Norway – there appears to be an invasive factor on how the community polices its members, especially how women should appear and how they should be. This notion of community monitoring touches upon some of the ingrained traditional gender perspectives. I now turn to the perception of Vietnamese and Norwegian gender norms among the participants in this research.

6 The Construction of Gender

The participants of this study find themselves living under the influence of two cultures with different understandings of gender. In order to understand how the participants perceive their own gender identity, it is important to understand how they interpret gender as related to the Vietnamese and Norwegian cultures. This chapter will build on the experiences of both the first- and second-generation participants to create a picture of gender in Vietnam and in Norway as they perceive it. Even though the first-generation participants had more direct experiences with Vietnamese culture, the information they provide can be supplemented by their daughters' understandings of gender in Vietnam despite the fact that most of them lack first-hand experiences of it. The second-generation's account of Vietnamese gender roles will be from their observation of their parents or other family members and/or from what their parents have told them about gender in Vietnamese culture. All the participants perceived that Norwegian gender norms were different from Vietnamese cultural norms but disagreed to what extent they were different.

6.1 Perceptions of Vietnamese Gender Norms

Having grown up in Vietnamese society, first-generation participants can provide a first-hand account of what they believed womanhood meant in Vietnam. These accounts also frequently use their understanding of Vietnamese manhood in order to juxtapose their conception of Vietnamese womanhood. Many of the first-generation participants felt unsure about what gender norms in Vietnam were supposed be because they migrated at an early age. Through their observations in Vietnam, most first-generation participants formulated similar representations of the Vietnamese womanhood at the time they left. Because of their uncertainty, it is possible that either the gender norms were very strong in Vietnam or they were reciting generalized statements.

Predominantly, they conveyed the view that women were supposed to take care of the domestic sphere in Vietnam. Ly (S.G.) remembered being told by her mother that, *"the men go out and drink a lot and don't do shit at home and sit there and expect the wives to do something."* Thao (F.G.) remembered that, *"women should stay home, care for the family. Men would go out to find money to support the family."* This was a similar statement to what Trang (F.G.) experienced back then in Vietnam, *"we just… we just stayed home, we gave birth to the children. The husband went to work but we raised the children. We didn't go out a lot.... We just followed the husband."* She added that, *"In Vietnam, men rarely went to the store. Usually,*

it was the women." Here, she created the perception that women would seldom leave the home unless they were doing something domestic for the family. However, this is a view that was contested by Thuy (F.G.) who explained that women in Vietnam *do* do tasks that are not domestically oriented even though she agrees with what was said about domestic responsibilities:

> *"if the husband had to go out and farm, women would also go farm too. It's a little sad though because even if the women went and worked outside, their obligations were within the house: making food, cleaning, taking care of the children. In Vietnam, if the women didn't have a job, then they only had one thing to do and it's to be at home. If they did work outside of the home, then they have two jobs—the one at home and the place they earn money."*

Even Tuyet (F.G.) thought that it was harder to be a woman because women needed *"to care for the children. The role and image a woman should strive for is that of a caring mother and wife, even if she did go to work"* but she also expressed that, though it may be hard, *"sometimes, they voluntarily liked these sorts of domestic work because was a way for them to show their affection."*

Since most women at the time stayed home and men went to work, some of the participants talked about the dependency women had on men. Tien (F.G.) said she wished that there was *"independence for the women in the family"* and Thuy (F.G.) thought this dependency meant that *"you were at the mercy of the person that brought home money."* Women in Vietnam are not as respected as their male counterparts, at least, that's what Tuyet (F.G.) seems to think. She said that, *"In Vietnam, a woman wasn't respected as much…. If we valued a person by respecting them, maybe husbands wouldn't beat their wives. Women back then took the beating so that they could keep their children's father. The government at the time did not provide any type of support for them."* Thuy (F.G.) saw this dependency as being due to the lack of education that the women at the time had. Other first-generation participants such as Thao, Tien, Trinh, and Trang explained that education simply was not important for women as their domain was taking care of the home. While some girls did go to school, the parents could take them out of primary school to help around the house or for any other reason they saw fit. Education, however, was important for the boys because it was needed for them to have a good job (Thao; Tien; Trang, F.G.). Tien (F.G.) explained the difference:

> *"it's actually pretty connected. Why did men have more education? So they can find a good job that brings home money and take care of their future family. Families would find that it is important for the son to go to school and the girls would stay home to take care of the house. They didn't need to go to school. But this is, of course, from a long time ago when people used to think that the women's only role was to care for the children. Before 1975, the wages of the husband were enough to care for his wife and his children…. So your question, it is interrelated to the question of why did the husband bring home the money? Because when he was younger, he was able to go to school.*

Furthermore, the participants explained that women were also expected to behave in a way that was deemed befitting of a Vietnamese woman. The experiences of the first-generation seemed to have proliferated to the second-generation participants as they shared many of the same sentiments on what Vietnamese womanhood entailed when it come to their behavior. Women from both generations spoke about how modesty was important for women in Vietnam and the Vietnamese community in Norway, whereas the men seemed to have less pressure of modesty. For instance, they posit that men seemed to have more freedom than they did when it came to going out. Trinh (F.G.) explained that *"So when a boy went out, it's less pressured, more free because the parents weren't as worried like they were for the girls. If she went out, she had to come home early and the boy, if he received permission, he could come home whenever he wants."* The women's activities are limited to going to restaurants with friends or the movies, but the family must be informed of where she is going and when she would be back. When a woman does go out, she cannot drink beer or become drunk because, *"if a woman did that, she would be considered as bad, improper"* (Thuy, F.G.).

For Vietnamese women in Norway, Lan (S.G.) agrees that, Vietnamese family are *"more strict with their daughters. They can't go outside that much, they can't do this or that."* Linh (S.G.) provided another view that the girls do go out but they do it in secret and that, *"I don't think [that their] brothers needed to do things in secrecy like the girls because it was [more acceptable that they go out and do things]."* In her own experience, Le (F.G.) described that her brother,

> *"he's a boy so if something bad happened to him, it does not ruin the family's reputation but if it was me, if I go out, there are people who will say 'Oh, that girl, she didn't get home that night' which means it's really bad for the parents and no one will marry me."*

From these point of views, there does not seem to be a fear that men will become bad in a similar manner as they were allowed to come and go as they like.

There is also the expectation that "*Vietnamese women, whatever they do, they should think about their husband and children first, about how their actions impact them"* (Loan, S.G.). If not their husband and children, they should worry about how their actions could impact their parents (Trinh, F.G.). Thus, how a woman behaves impact the family as a whole, meaning they have to be aware of what they do, to not be seen as "bad".

Many of the participants, both first and second-generation, talked about how Vietnamese women are supposed to walk, speak, or even sit. The participants said that in Vietnam and in the Vietnamese community in Norway, people valued Vietnamese women who were described as *"quiet, small, speaking properly and respectfully and when doing anything, not loud but graceful"* (Trinh, F.G.). *"Women should be light in their steps and not sit like a man with legs spread apart"* and they *"can't be as straightforward [as men]"* (Thuy, F.G.). Lan (S.G.) remembered being told, when she was younger, *"that girls shouldn't laugh out loud, should sit nicely and look after the children—they care for the children and family"* and subsequently concluding that boys *"could be more free and laugh louder, they could be more active, run like they wanted to and wear almost whatever they wanted. Yeah, I think that Vietnamese women and girls are told not to wear too short skirts and not to expose their body."* It is in this constructed image that Vietnamese women, in general, were expected to behave in the Vietnamese society and community, even to this day.

It appears as if Vietnamese men, in Vietnam and Norway, are not under the same amount of scrutiny that Vietnamese women seem to face. Participants from both generations suggest that men, or having a son, seem to be preferred in the Vietnamese society. Most of the first-generation participants said something along the lines of boys being more important and valued higher than girls. The second-generation participants corroborated this sentiment.

When asked why boys seem to be perceived more favorably, Tuyet (F.G.) responded that, *"if the boy is the oldest, he would become head of the family, take care of the family…. When they get married, their wives would go live with the husbands so the parents don't have a lot of hope or like of girls because [they don't stay home to take care of the family]"*. Le (S.G.) said replied, *"I don't know, I think it's the Asian culture that [the boy is] going to be the man of the family, he's going to be the one that keeps the last name."* Essentially, because men will carry on the family name and stays home after he gets married, he can still take care of the family. The first-

generation posits that this is why they invest more in the boys by allowing them to finish their education to find a good job – more so than girls.

Before they migrated, the views of Vietnamese gender norms contain women to the household. While some participants make women seem as if they are powerless, Thuy (F.G.) provides a somewhat different view. In her perspective, there are two views of women, one from the public sphere and one from the private sphere:

> *"a lot of scenarios put us [women] in that position of [being dependent on men for financial security]. This means that when women are always a bit lower than men, they don't have the same worth. It can also be reinforced in the family but not to the same extent as it is in the public. As I see it, from the outside the family, women aren't as valued as men but within the family, the woman makes a lot of decisions. If the husband does make a decision and the wife does not agree, then it's moot. So it's really just the outside that shows the lack of independence but inside, the husband can still do whatever he wants but is still very giving of his wife."*

Thus, she suggests that women are not entirely powerless, it is just that their "power" is limited to the domestic field, especially since they are the main caretaker in the private sphere.

The participants all felt that Vietnamese gender norms are very traditional as they explained that the Vietnamese gender norms expects women to take care of the family and to be careful not to shame the family. They also perceived boys and men to be more free and without the burden of shaming the family that girls have. Therefore, there is more scrutiny on girls and their behavior than for the boys. The cultural gender norm seems to require men have an education in order to get a good job, but that this was less relevant for women. Staying at home and taking care of the family and the domestic sphere more generally did not require education and obtaining work was simply not expected nor demanded of them. The second-generation participants also believe that Vietnamese gender norms prescribe that girls are supposed to be more restricted than the boys.

6.2 Perceptions of Norwegian Gender Norms

When the first-generation participants first moved Bergen, Norway, they experienced several changes. The type of people they met and the social environment they found themselves in were drastically different. Another change most of them experienced was particularly the different lifestyle of women in Norway. The first-generation participants believe that Norwegian women

conduct themselves differently in public than the women in Vietnam. When speaking about gender norms in Norway, most of the first-generation participants do not discern a time difference, meaning, their first impression of Norwegian women were still relevant at the time of the interview. However, second-generation participants had varied perceptions of the gender norms in Norway and the role of women.

Two of the first-generation participants expressed that when they first came to Norway, they did not see Norwegian women as too different from them. Tuyet (F.G.) simply said that Norwegian women were *"like us except for one thing. Women could talk about the things they didn't like and husbands respect their wives."* Thuy (F.G.) further explained that,

> *"In terms what I've learned, I think that back then, Norwegian women were just like us. They stayed home, took care of the children while the husband went to work. The husband also had a lot of decision-making power since he brought home the money but it wasn't as bad as in Vietnam. Later, they started going to work and now, they're pretty independent."*

She also said that *"some of the women earned money by looking after children while parents were working. It was called, 'dagmamma'- day mother."* But the rest of the other first-generation participants saw that women in Norway did not have to care as much about being modest as they did when they were in Vietnam. The participants also did not distinguish between then and now as they still perceived Norwegian women the same way they did when they arrived. Take for example Thao (F.G.), she said that, *"Here [in Norway], whatever the women like, they get it. They can go dancing, do whatever they want."* Along the same lines, Trinh (F.G.) said that, *"During the weekends, they go out, they dance, drink beer. After they turned 18, they could do whatever."* While women in Vietnam were expected to be quiet and not too straightforward, Tien (F.G.) felt that *"the Norwegian women can be honest, say things straight from their own thoughts whereas we [Vietnamese women] have to choose our words, think about it and to say things in a way that make people happy."*

When it came to the behavior of Norwegian women, the first-generation participants felt they were less restricted. For Thao (F.G.), she thought that the most important value for a Norwegian woman was that in *"Norwegian society, women and children can be like men."* Women in Norway also appeared to have equal footing as their male counterparts as *"no one can hold decision-making powers for another person"* (Trang, F.G.). This could be because the participants believe Norwegian women to be respected by the people around them, just as men

are respected. In this way, Thuy (F.G.) explained that Norwegian gender norms did not see men as superior to women because, *"men in Norway… do not underestimate women, they don't think that women are incapable. Even if they don't like that, sometimes, women are more capable or make more money than them… they don't try to push women down or belittle them."* The first-generation participants appeared to see that Norwegian women were, and still are, much more free to do as they like in Norway. Perhaps this was and is made possible by the support the government offer. Trang (F.G.) explained that:

> *"in Vietnam, the husband did not value their wife and so once they arrived in Norway, the women start to leave their family. They leave the family because the community in Norway will support them. The society [in Norway] will protect the women, always… they care for the women, for the children and there's nothing like that in Vietnam."*

Le (S.G.) also talk about the support she believes Norwegian women gets from the Norwegian government. They have *"support from the Norwegian government and they have support from their parents at home because the parents teach the children to be… independent"* enough to have the right to speak for themselves.

These are the positive ways the participants view how Norwegian women and how they are expected to be in Norway. With that said, the first-generation participants almost unanimously agreed that Norwegian women were too independent, doing things without thinking about the people around them. Thuy (F.G.) said that Norwegian women:

> *"for the most part, they think more about themselves. How they can have higher education, how to be better than their husbands, better wages than their husband, as long as they are better than their husbands. So they do have rights but it has come to the point where they have to better than the men and step on them."*

Put another way, Tuyet (F.G.) expressed that *"some [Norwegian] women worry too much about their career when they have kids."* When Trinh (F.G.) first arrived to Norway, as mentioned earlier, she saw that girls around her age were out drinking, smoking and doing what they wanted. This was hard for her to accept thought that they had too much freedom. She said that *"there was no society to sort of reign them back. They worry for themselves more than others."* Trang (F.G.) shared similar thoughts about not being able to accept that women were able to do such things, that they were too much like men, saying, *"I don't like that Norwegian women, with the freedom they're given, go overboard with going out, smoking and drinking."* That said, the first-generation participants often add qualifiers by saying that though this is their

perspective, they were aware that not all Norwegian women behaved in such a manner. It was just how they perceived the form freedom could take if women were too independent.

Though most of the first-generation participants viewed Norwegian gender norms as very different from their own, the second-generation participants had a more diverse view of the gender norms. Some of them thought that the change in gender norms in Norway occurred because Norwegian women were vocal about wanting equal rights to men (Tien, F.G.; Linh, S.G.) and therein lies the difference between Norwegian women and women in Vietnam. Tien (F.G.) said that women in Vietnam did not vocalize this desire. They just internalized it and hoped that eventually men would intuitively understand that Vietnamese women wanted them to help at home.

All the second-generation participants agree that women now are more equal to men in Norway compared to what they were when the first generation settled. According to the participants *"Norwegians try not to make a difference between boys and girls"* (Lan, S.G.), *"the [Norwegian] women here… can choose not to work, choose to stay home with the family and care for the kids. Plus, many of the [Norwegian] families share the responsibilities. The men do the domestic chores as much as the women at home"* (Ly, S.G.). Even though they felt that Norway appeared to be more equal than in Vietnam, the second-generation participants felt that remnants of the old Norwegian gender norms were still present. Some Norwegian women also stayed at home while the men worked. As Ly (S.G.) states:

> *"I've grown up with two cultures and I really love them both but gender wise, I don't see any difference here but* some *are like, of course, some people are still like, 'Oh, you're a woman, you still have to that' and yeah but I think that [happens] everywhere [regardless of culture]."*

Lan (S.G.) explained from her experience that even now:

> *"It depends on the family because now, when I talk to my friends and colleagues, they're pretty much the same as me, being in the kitchen, doing the cooking, doing the laundry. They have husbands that don't see the things [that need to be done] and I think it's more a gender problem, not so much a nationality problem."*

Even though Norway attempts to present itself as having gender equality, it does not mean that its norms are free from scrutiny because, according to Lieu (S.G.):

> *"I always perceived the role of women as pretty equal [to men] growing up, definitely. It's more like now when I'm working that I see that there are more inequality and like, women being treated differently. You see women in strong positions everywhere, of course, but when you're in a meeting room, you can sometimes notice how men talk to women versus how they talk to other men."*

While it seems that the participants see that Norwegian women appear to enjoy certain freedoms that the Vietnamese women do not, there are still similarities that both culture experiences when it comes to gender norms in society.

However, the responses from the second-generation was much more mixed than their mothers when it comes the freedom Norwegian women have. The first generation almost unanimously agreed that they believed that the Norwegian women had too much freedom but this was not a sentiment that all the second-generation shared. While there were only six second-generation participants, their answers revealed how their thoughts about Norwegian women varied. Lan (S.G.) perceived herself as neutral explaining that *"I don't think it's very different being a Vietnamese girl from being a Norwegian girl… my Norwegian friends are the same as me actually because I don't feel very different [from them] even though I grew up in a Vietnamese family and community."* Ly (S.G.) and Lieu (S.G.) did not perceive that Norwegian women had too much freedom. They did not explicitly say this but it can be implied from the fact that they were pushing gender boundaries in the family (discussed in detail in chapter 8), doing things that the first-generation participants criticized. However, Linh (S.G.), Loan (S.G.), and Le (S.G.) shared the same thought as the first generation about too much freedom. Linh (S.G.) thought Norwegian women cared too much about equality, particularly in the childcare area:

> *"they're so equal that they share everything 50-50. So I feel like, sometimes, it sounds so stressful! Everything should be shared, [even taking care of a baby] like, 'Oh, I have to work, I have to stay up this night, the next night is yours.' Sometimes, it's easier that you're [the one] nursing the baby because men cannot do that. I think it's stressful because sometimes, they [women] have to take the breast milk out so the father can get up at night to [to nurse the baby] and I'm like, 'Oh my god! I'm not going to take time to take breast milk into a bottle so he can do it! [I'd rather just do it myself!]."*

For Loan (S.G.) and Le (S.G), when arguing that Norwegian women have too much freedom, they referred to how they Norwegians have high divorce statistics and infidelity. Loan (S.G.) thinks that divorce rates are high because:

> *"[Norwegian women] do whatever they want. I mean it in a way that they feel like they like it, so they want it, they can see that they are happy then they would continue [with marriage]. Maybe they feel if they aren't happy, they don't like [the marriage] then they would immediately stop it and not notice how they impact their children or the people around them."*

Le (S.G.) felt that Norwegian women have too much freedom because *"they don't value one another. They don't—the love, the caring for each other and the kids is a little too… I think they're expecting something in return for it"*. She did not like the extent of freedom based on her workplace experience,

> *"I've been working here for [a while] and so every time it's a Christmas party or any big party at work, I see that, you know, [the women] are flirting around and sometimes they don't respect their partner at home and that, I don't like. Because the day after, they won't remember anything or they just pretend to… pretend that nothing happened the day before and… I would never accept that."*

Thus, for the last two participants, their arguments for thinking there was too much freedom had more to do with relationship behavior than it did about status and habits that women have.

6.3 Conclusion

Both first- and second-generation believed Vietnamese gender norms were characterized by more traditional beliefs that emphasized differences between men and women compared Norwegian gender norms. This included that women should be taking care of the domestic sphere and men going to work. Additionally, there was a specific way that women were supposed to behave such as not speaking out of turn, being quiet, not dressing in revealing clothes, whereas boys could be loud and running, and generally had more freedom than the girls. There appears to be a sense of women bearing the burden of the family's reputation. Despite arriving at a time where gender norms were going through major changes in Norway, the first-generation participants perceived Norwegian women as being less restricted than Vietnamese women, as they could go out late or drink. It is important to investigate this as it has to deal with how they perceive gender. This contributes to the next section as it provides an understanding of how these gender norms impacted the participants lived experiences.

7 Gender Norms and Gendered Practices

Having discussed the participants' perception of gender from the Vietnamese culture and the Norwegian culture, I will now look into how these gender norms have impacted their lives. This chapter will be split into two different sections. First, I will explore how Vietnamese gender norms impacted the first-generation while they were living in Vietnam and discuss what type of gendered expectations their family had for them. I will then discuss whether the participants felt as if their role as women changed and if gendered expectations changed once they moved to Norway. Secondly, I will discuss how the second-generation felt their lives were impacted by the Vietnamese influence of gender norms and if the Norwegian gender norms shaped their perception of themselves. The discussion of influences is based upon how they perceived their parents' role at home and how being in Norway impacts them and their understanding of these roles.

7.1 Gendered Expectations from Vietnam to Norway – First-Generation

The participants have thus far spoken about the general societal expectations for women. However, it is within their families that they were socialized to fulfil these gender roles and how it is sustained in their relationships. It is important to see what the parents of the first-generation participants wanted for them and how this shaped their view of gender. Furthermore, it is relevant to explore if and how Norwegian gender norms have altered their perceptions, because it can ultimately shape their daughter's perspectives and understanding of gender as well.

7.1.1 Family expectations

The first-generation participants all provided a view that women had a set role to play in Vietnam. However, whether these gender norms actually impacted their life is a different story. The private experiences of the first-generation participants could be different from what the Vietnamese public sphere may expect from them. When asked about what their parents, and subsequently, their spouses, expected from them as women, the answers varied. While some recognized that there were gendered expectations for them, others did not agree. Rather, they felt as if, for the most part, their parents and significant others did not expect anything specific from them based on their gender.

When the first-generation participants lived with their parents, some of them saw that their parents adhered to the gender norms they mentioned previously. Tuyet (F.G.) saw that her mother stayed home to do the housework and Thuy (F.G.) said that,

> *"my dad was the breadwinner and my mom stayed home and took care of the family, cooking. But she had her own set of money, even if my dad worked. His money was to take care of the family, divided on what was needed like food or water. He'd then pocket some of the money and give the rest over to my mom to decide how to use it."*

This was also the case for Tien (F.G.) as she explained that she did not have to worry about anything other than school *"because at the time, dad could still work."*

For their parents, some posited that getting married was what their parents wanted for them, saying, *"they wanted me to have a husband, having a husband is good so they can love you. My parents liked that"* (Thao, F.G.) and for Tien (F.G.), *"The customs in my family is that women, importantly, should get married, love and care for their children, treat their husband's family well."* Getting married, however, was just part of the overall picture; the parents wanted their daughters to have a family of their own, saying that that would make the parents happy (Tien; Trang, F.G.). Furthermore, it was deemed necessary to be taught about family because, *"we raise and teach the children. We need to know how to make food, clean the table, clean the house properly."*

Diverging from this narrative, Tuyet (F.G.) and Trinh (F.G.) did not feel that their parents expected them to get married or have a family. Tuyet (F.G.) said this was *"because the time period was different. There was more worry about being a soldier [going to war] so there were no expectations."* Even though Thuy's (F.G.) father kept telling her to find a husband, she felt that, *"In my house – at least I think so – I had a lot of freedom because I was never forced to get married."* When it comes to the expectation about marriage, the parents of the first-generation participants thus differed from each other.

Most of the participants spoke about the expectations their father had for them more than their mothers – if they even mentioned their mother at all. For one pair of parents, they wanted two different things for their daughter. Tien (F.G.) explained that, *"my dad wanted me to go to school but my mom wanted me to stay home to help my grandma because there's a lot of people in my family, to help look after my siblings."* For Tuyet (F.G.) and Trinh (F.G.), they also felt that their father wanted them to go to school but did not mention what expectations their mother

had for them. They both felt that there was no talk about marriage or children from their father. Trinh (F.G.) thought that it was because her father was progressive, saying:

> *"He wanted even the girls to go to school. It could be that, in my family, I am lucky that my father thinks progressively so I benefitted from it. It could also be that the families that live in rural areas in the 80s, were not as progressive so they would force the girls to work and abandon their studies."*

Thuy (F.G) considered her father to be more traditional than her mother because *"He followed the way of the old customs that have been around for many years. If a woman lives at home, she follows, listens and serves the father. When she's married, she serves the husband and when the husband dies, she serves the children."* Trang (F.G.) had similar experiences to Tuyet (F.G.) and Trinh (F.G.) when it came to her parents' perception of education but expressed that her parents did expect more of her brothers, saying, *"My younger brother, my dad let him go to school and he was always asking him to do well in school. For the girls, we didn't need to go to school very much, just being good at house work was enough."* Thao (F.G.) also felt that her parents put more emphasis on her brothers going to school than they did for her. Education appeared to have been more important to most of the participants' fathers.

Most of the participants said that when it comes to the rules imposed by their parents, they would listen. Thus, they were shaped by the behaviors that their parents wanted them to have. For instance, they had to be proper and polite. One form of politeness was the way one spoke to another. Tien (F.G.) said that, choosing the right words to say was important, *"not just saying random things so that it doesn't bother anyone…. My parents also taught me to be a good, straight-edge person, to persevere in school, dressing nicely so that people knew that we have been taught well."* Thuy (F.G.) was the most vocal about her thoughts at home and told a humorous story about how she was reminded of what it meant to be polite,

> *"Sometimes, I get yelled at or get in trouble or am reminded about the way I talk. I guess women have to be more restrained in what they're saying than men. You can't be as straightforward, don't speak too loudly, be soft and demure. But I often got in trouble at home because when I talked, I talked as if there were more than ten men together! I often argued at home and was told to go be a lawyer since I was so good at arguing!"*

Other ways of demonstrating proper gendered behavior was about how they conducted themselves in public. When Trinh (F.G.) was young she said that, compared to her brother, she and her sister would *"have to come home early. We weren't allowed to come home late in the*

evening. We didn't have permission to go grab some beers". They justified these rules as for the safety of the women because, *"the reality of that time in the community was that it wasn't safe. People didn't want a girl to go out late at night."* These were the daily behaviors that the participants felt that they had to exhibit while they were in Vietnam.

When it came to practical roles in the family, the expectations were less divergent for the participants. The participants presented a gendered division of labor that they had in their immediate family. Most of the participants recalled that they did a lot of the housework whereas brothers were delegated to different tasks that were more mechanical or involved heavy lifting. Trinh (F.G.) felt that it was fair that she did the housework because even though her brother didn't have to do it, *"there were certain chores that he had to do that I didn't."* For Tuyet (F.G.) who had multiple sisters, the household chores were assigned amongst them whereas the boys, *"if we needed help to fix cars or anything heavy, we would ask the guys."* Another way men could help, Tien (F.G.) explained, was by taking over the woman's public work. She said that,

> *"Later, after '75, the government forced everyone to farm, so for women, that work was heavy. So the boys had to go farm for the girls so that the girls could stay at home and take care of the home. At the time, I already had a husband but in my family, the males had to do the heavy work. Like lifting dirt, or anything heavy."*

Another interesting point to investigate, however, was their relationships with their husbands and whether these gendered expectations by the husbands changed when they moved to Norway. Thao (F.G.) and Thuy (F.G.) said that, contrary to what was expected, their husbands came to live with them in their family rather than them moving in with the husband's family. For Thao (F.G.) and Trang (F.G.), they saw that their husbands did not want them to work. Trang (F.G.) said that *"my husband was able to earn enough to support me and the children… So he didn't want me to do anything other than take care of the house and children."* Another participant, Tien (F.G.), said she did not feel like her husband really expected her to do anything while in Vietnam, *"we intuitively understood and voluntarily did things for each other. I didn't always get up to make the coffee for him, I didn't always have to wash his clothes for him. I just think there was work that we just did. There was no division. If he saw it, he would do it, that's it."* However, she felt her situation was a bit different from others because she did not live with her husband. When she had children, she had to take care of them herself for the first ten years, not because that was what he expected her to do, but because he had to be away because of the war.

This was a similar situation to Le's (S.G.) situation with her mother. Le (S.G.) explained that, *"what I remember was that my father was in jail for a long time due to the war in Vietnam. I think he was jailed right after my birth and then he came out when I was seven. I didn't know my dad until, you know, he just suddenly came home and said that 'I'm your dad.'"* For these women, i.e. Tien (F.G.) and the mother of Le (S.G.), they found themselves to be the sole caretakers of the children, not because their husband expected it of them but because the war separated them from each other. For Thuy (F.G.), she was married but she hardly talked about what her husband expected or did not expect of her. She did mention that she worked and her mother helped her take care of her child, which gave her an opportunity to continue working in Vietnam. From this assessment of herself, it could be surmised that her husband – even if he did expect her to behave a certain way – she still did what she wanted to do. It could also be that her husband expected her to work, but either way, she did as she saw fit.

These experiences from Vietnam about how the first-generation participants were impacted by gender shaped their understanding of which cultural norms of gender they would want to transmit to their daughters. Though the first-generation's parents maintained traditional beliefs of gender, the actualization of what they wanted for their daughters was also different from the gender norms. Some wanted the first-generation to have higher education, to go to work, which were not traditional for women in Vietnam at the time. It can also provide a contrast to how the second-generation was raised in Norway, particularly the extent to which their gender experiences were similar or not because they were raised in a different environment.

7.1.2 Changes in Gender Roles and Expectations in Norway

When the first-generation participants left Vietnam and came to Norway, some found that their position in society changed. For one thing, Thao (F.G.) and Tuyet (F.G.) found that it was not possible to be a stay-at-home mom/wife because living in Norway was too expensive for a single breadwinner. Additionally, Tuyet (F.G.) said that *"I don't think I have to be [a stay-at-home mom] like my mom was because here [in Bergen], the community demands the women to go to work, even if you didn't want to."* Thao (F.G.) explained that she stayed home with the kids until they were old enough to go to daycare and found a job but when prompted if her husband had the same expectations for her as he did when they were in Vietnam, she said, *"Well, he didn't want or expect anything from me but I wanted to [work] because the kids were at an age to be put in daycare and it wasn't very busy or nice to stay at home alone."* In Tien's (F.G.) experience, now that she was reunited with her husband in Norway, she found he was

more involved with the family because he was better able to. In Norway, she worked and then came home to take care of the house work and children. She said that:

> *"it's not like my husband doesn't do anything. He washes the dishes and the chores are divided in the house…. He helps in any way he can, washes and dries the clothes, he can't cook very well but he's good at cleaning the dishes. We both go to work, come home and help each other. He helps the children with their schoolwork."*

She maintained that anything a woman can do, her husband could do. This did not change because they moved to Norway. This was also the case for Trinh (F.G.), who also felt that her Vietnamese husband, whom she married in Norway, was also very good at dividing work at home. For those who married in Vietnam and moved to Norway with their spouse, only one participant got a divorce because her husband was unable to accept that she was adapting better than he was. While her husband seemed to have accepted the fact that she was a working woman in Vietnam, his perception changed when he deemed her to be doing better than him in Norway.

When it comes to gender norms the participants also had different perceptions of whether or not they had changed after moving to Norway. Most felt as if they remained the same as they did in Vietnam and this was particularly true for first-generations Thao, Tien, Trinh, and Trang. For Tien (F.G.) and Trinh (F.G.), they felt that their thinking as a Vietnamese woman did not change, even if their role in Norway is different from what was expected of them by the society in Vietnam. Tien (F.G.) explained that:

> *"I don't think I'm [restricted]. I have clothes and money. From Vietnam to here, I have always had my own money because I have a job. That's why I don't feel like I have to wait for my husband…. I'm happy with my life, there's nothing I really want [from the Norwegian culture]. I mean, I can drive, work, say what I think. What is on my mind, I can freely say. My husband already doesn't restrict my options to speak freely so I can already do that."*

This was not the same the same sentiment Thuy (F.G.) had:

> *"I did change a lot because when you move to a different country, you start adopting their culture and customs here. With the war, it really upset a lot of customs in Vietnam so I can't say for sure that I wouldn't have changed if I didn't come to Norway. But from how I see it – comparing myself now to then – I have changed. Firstly, I didn't really have friends here so I had to change. I had to find out how to live in this new life, I*

couldn't really depend on someone. So, the change was that I think I became more independent."

In this statement though, she seemed to be unsure about the extent of the change she went through when she moved to Norway. The only participant that noticed a discernible change was Tuyet (F.G.) who said, *"In Vietnam… if there was something that made me unhappy, it was unlikely I could say anything as a woman, but here, I can say what makes me unhappy. I see that in myself. I have more freedom, independence."* From here, it seems that a majority of the participants did not feel like they changed as a woman even if their lifestyle changed because of their move to Norway.

But they did notice that other women who migrated to Norway from Vietnam were impacted by Norwegian gender norms. From the very basic level, there were Vietnamese women who picked up on the independence that Norway offered and did the same things Norwegian women did, *"they made use of that [freedom] and went out, danced, drank beer"* (Trinh, F.G.). Trang (F.G.) explained there was also another way that Norwegian gender norms impacted the newly arrived Vietnamese women at the time by explaining,

"[Vietnamese women] see how relaxed [Norwegian women] are and how they're enjoying their lives. In Vietnam, the husbands did not [value their wives] and so [once in Norway], they started to leave the family. They left the family because the community here would support them. Its not like in Vietnam where there is no community to support them. The society [in Norway] will protect women, always."

These narratives reveal that, though they did not see themselves as too impacted by Norwegian gender norms, they see the other women from Vietnam being influenced by them in both negative and positive ways. In relation to the topic discussed in Ch. 5, the participants expressed that they have integrated into Norwegian society but as this chapter reveals, they did not feel as if they were impacted by and adopted the gender norms prevalent in Norway. However, it seems that there are those who, at the time of arrival to Norway, embraced the Norwegian lifestyle of greater autonomy and freedom.

7.2 Role of Vietnamese Gender Norms in Norway – Second-Generation

The conversations about "traditional Vietnamese roles" in the Vietnamese community in were intermingled with how the second-generation participants actually perceived their parents'

conformation of what they understood as "traditional" gender roles. Ly (S.G.) laughed when expressing how she saw her parents,

> *"Yeah, absolutely. I can see that a lot on* them. *My father (chuckles), he likes to, you know, do nothing (laugh). [He] lets my mom do everything and he feels like it's* her *responsibilities, but paying the bills and such, is his responsibility. He works hard and pay the bills. My mom also works but she uses the money on food."*

She also supplied that, *"my mom, she likes her role. She likes to cook and clean and be a real housewife and take care of the kids but she also worked one hundred percent."* This was not the case for all of the participants though. Even though Lan (S.G.) observed that women appeared to have a place in the domestic sphere (cooking and taking care of children and the family), she explained that, *"I have to say that we are not very traditional. Meaning… my father is very helpful, he can stay in the kitchen, he cooks, he can help my mother do the laundry or wash the house so he's not so typical."* Loan (S.G.) also felt her father was helpful in the domestic life and that *"I see that I am really lucky I have a father who, even though he's an old-timer… From what I know – and I know a number of them – men from Vietnam don't really divide work with their wives in their family life."* Along the same lines, Linh (S.G.) felt that, though her mother was the main caretaker because *"she was the one that was in charge of everything.* Everything *(laughs). The rules were made by her, everyone listened to her, including my dad. That's what I'm used to. She knows everything and she can do everything."* From these accounts, the participants found that their mother still took on the caretaker role but the difference is that it does not seem as if their mothers were alone. The fathers seemed capable of helping in the home and *did* help their mothers with the domestic chores.

That said, they did see that there seemed to be a preference for boys in the Vietnamese community in Bergen. As Ly (S.G.) recalls

> *"Because they had me and my sister first, my dad wanted one more baby because he really, really wanted a boy… and so when my baby brother was born, I think… I don't know, maybe they did treat him differently… I don't have an example (laughs). You just* know *if your parents like your sibling better than you. You just know by the way they act and talk, but I think they love us equally! But I think my dad* likes *my brother better."*

For the more extreme case, Le (S.G.) saw that her brothers were given much more freedom and was immune to judgement or discipline from the family. This, to her, signaled favoritism within her family for boys. Even outside of the family, the participants seemed to see that there was

pressure from the community to have boys and that the community will only be happy once there is a baby boy. Linh (S.G.) witnessed one of her friends being pressured to have kids until she had a boy. Only then was the husband's family happy. Loan (S.G.) remembered that when they had visitors for the holidays they often said, *"that if there isn't a boy, then my mom is not a filial daughter to her ancestors because she couldn't give birth to a boy [and so the family name would not be carried on]."* Thus, even though the participants saw that there wasn't complete compliance with the traditional Vietnamese gender roles, the preference for boys seems prevalent still in the Vietnamese community.

7.2.1 The Impact of Norwegian Gender Norms on Second-Generation Participants

Having grown up in a Norwegian society while living in a Vietnamese community, all of the second-generation participants believed they had been substantially impacted by Norwegian gender norms. When compared to what they understood of Vietnamese gender norms, all of the participants believed themselves to be more independent and outspoken than their mothers were. To start with, Lan (S.G.) said *"Whether I like it or not, of course it [Norwegian gender norms] has impacted me. I'm not sure in which way because I'm not what you call a 'typical Norwegian girl' either. Maybe that's because I'm also a little shy and don't want to stick out my nose"* but despite that, *"I've been in conflict with my husband's family because his family is more traditional [in gender expectations]. I cannot accept and tolerate everything there… so I speak up more and that is considered bad."* This seems to express her lack of desire to rigidly maintain traditional Vietnamese gender roles to the same extent her husband's family expected.

Another way a second-generation participant felt herself impacted was how Loan (S.G.) did not have *"enough perseverance like [my mom]. I'm more stubborn because I do think about myself more…. I think more about fairness than my mom who only thinks about the children, the husband, and not about themselves."* She thinks that it is harder for her to sacrifice herself for the family because living in Norway possibly gave her a *"better life [than in Vietnam]. We have enough [here], we have a better life so our perseverance isn't the same as those before us."* On a similar note about sacrifice and fairness, Le (S.G.) said that:

> *"the men are responsible for the house as much as the women. So, if I clean the house, my husband should too. If I do the dishes, he should too. If I do the laundry then he should too. That's what I think. If I want to live happy, we have to do it together because*

I work too. I also get tired so when I come home, I can't do all that stuff myself when he's just lying on the sofa."

The participants were not able to pinpoint exactly how they were influenced but they provided several sources of influences that were possible such as watching Norwegian television, hanging out with their Norwegian friends, and/or reading books. Other impacts were based on how open their parents were in accepting Norwegian gender norms. Linh (S.G.) explained that *"I had so much freedom when I hung out with Norwegian children when I was younger. Whatever they were doing, I wanted to do. So I would ask my mom and when she said yes I think that impacted me a lot."* Trinh (F.G.) said that, *"Back then [in Vietnam], if I wanted to go anywhere, I have to ask my parents for permission, but I'm not like that with my children. I just request that if they go anywhere, they need to let me know…. If she [my daughter] does go, I ask 'Do you need anything, do you need me to drive you?'"* Having parental support was also a factor for some of the second-generation to see how they were impacted by Norwegian gender norms.

7.3 Conclusion

When compared to the first-generation participants, the second-generation found that their upbringing was much more relaxed than that of their mothers. They saw that they could do more without getting into as much trouble and perceived themselves as more equality-oriented The difference between their mothers' upbringing and theirs is that it appears their fathers helped around the house more and thus, the second-generation did not view themselves as solely responsible for taking care of the home. They were also more outspoken than their mothers, especially if they would disagree about something. In this sense, some of the second-generation participants see themselves as unable to sacrifice as much as their mothers when it comes to selflessly taking care of the children, their spouse, or their home. This also shows how integration into Norwegian society has impacted the second-generation participants perception of their gendered identity, what roles they take on, how they interact with others, and how they "do" gender differently from their mothers.

8 Cultural Transmission of Womanhood and Intergenerational Conflict

While some cultural transmissions are accepted by children, there are some transmissions that are received negatively, causing intergenerational conflict. This chapter will be split into two sections, one will discuss the cultural transmission of womanhood from the first to the second-generation and the second section will discuss whether or not intergenerational conflict existed with these cultural transmissions. The first section will discuss what the first generation wanted their daughters to learn from them and what values the second-generation picked up from their mother. There will also be a short section on how these transmissions might have impacted how the first generation raised their sons – if they have any. The second portion of this section will address the intergenerational between the participants and others they know have more conflict with their parents.

8.1 From the First to the Second-Generation

To understand how the first-generation might have transferred their ideals of womanhood to the second-generation, it is important to understand how they perceive women in Norway. Then we will discuss how the second-generation participants experienced cultural transmission by their mothers and what they believe, now, to be important as a woman. From previous chapters, the first-generation participants have expressed that they see Norwegian women as free and less restricted than Vietnamese women. While they deemed these traits as positive, many of them expressed a feeling that perhaps, the traits are taken to the extreme in Norwegian society. They preface these feelings by saying that they understand not all Norwegian women take these traits to the extreme but from their observation, they seem to see it often. Thao (F.G.) for example, thinks that Norwegian women are self-centered, and thus not focused enough on their children. She says that *"Sometimes, I don't think they worry for their children enough. The good things are that when they [Norwegian women] are strict enough, they show the children the way of life, correcting them but then there are those who just let their children run free."* Like Thao, all the first-generation participants expressed similar opinions that Norwegian women seem to not worry enough for their children. When compared to Vietnamese women,

> *"There is a difference in self-sacrifice of the [Vietnamese] women. They take care of their children, family, and husband. They think more about their children than themselves… Generally, women in Norway – while there are some who exhibit this quality – for the most part think about themselves"* (Thuy, F.G.).

Much like Thuy, many of the participants shared the sentiments that Norwegian women tend more to their careers than their family and that this is an attitude they do not agree with.

The first-generation participants perceive that Norwegian women have no inhibition and thus, go too far with their freedom. There is admiration but Trang (F.G.) critiques that *"Sometimes, they do go overboard, they drink, smoke, and go out here and there too much. You know, women in Norway, they smoke more than men do and that is not something I can accept…. They're too much like men. I can't accept it."* Trinh (F.G.), when she first came here, thought that Norwegian women were able to go out and drink after they have reached adulthood. She explained that *"Even so, I saw that in this society, there was too much independence [to the point of selfishness]. The society accepts that girls, after the age of 18, back then, [where free to do whatever they wanted]- I couldn't accept that after 18, they can do all that."* When she spoke about her perception of Norwegian women now, she referred to the same aspects. She still thought they were too independent, *"Yes, they are. There's no society to sort of reign them back. They worry for themselves more than others"* but offered what she thought why they were like this, *"But to be honest, the life here, the scene here, they have all they need so, of course, they are permitted to think like that."*

As such, these perceptions that women can go overboard with the traits previously mentioned colored the type of values that the first-generation wanted to transfer over to their daughters. For the first-generation, even though they said that they would support their daughters no matter what they chose, there were other more traditional values they wanted to impart on their daughters. One such value is that family is more important than career. However, if their daughter chose to use their freedom the way Norwegian women do, they hope that their daughters would not behave the way they perceive the Norwegian women as that is rendered improper. Most importantly, for their daughters, they all believe that caring for their family should be priority. Tuyet (F.G.) stated, *"As for their independence, I don't think it's always good so I want them [my kids] to be happy and I think they would be happier to sacrifice a little for their husband"*; this echoes Thuy's (F.G.) statement in saying that *"Independence and all is good but the children has to come first because they are the future of our society."* Thuy (F.G.) also more tolerantly says that *"[I] just the hope that they would prioritize their family, if it's like that, then that's great. I think it's better to care about [the children] but if they want to be like that, if they want to work then that's okay*." Trinh (F.G.) says that what she thinks is important to transfer to her daughter might not be important to her daughter but regardless, she said that:

"I think that women have responsibilities to the family so they can't be as relaxed as men. No matter what we do, at night, we return home, we stand next to the kitchen, still have to make food. We have to make sure that we still have that value. No matter where you go, if you come home and see the house is not clean and that food has not been made, you still do it…. I also think when it comes to cleaning clothes, women should do that. No matter how clever you are, there is still that."

The first-generation participants seem to believe that these traits are most prevalent for Vietnamese women and culture than for Norwegian. They believe that Vietnamese women sacrifice a lot more of their own freedom and independence for their family and that they can and should do the household chores. They felt that Norwegian women cared more about themselves, in terms of going out, drinking, and doing things that was usually looked down upon in Vietnam.

8.2 What the Second-Generation Vietnamese Women Learned

The women in the Vietnamese community perceive themselves to be very family-oriented, very respectful of the elders compared to Norwegians, and closely bonded to their family members in a way that Norwegians are not. This is a theme that came up often when speaking to both the first and second-generation women. Some of the first-generation participants feared that total integration into Norwegian society would cause their children to stray away from the family. This relates back to what the participants refer to as seeing Norwegian women as too independent. From their own observation of their family or being told by their mother, the second-generation participants believed themselves to have learned how to value and think about their family. In the words of Le (S.G.), "*What I really like [about the Vietnamese culture] is the love and caring of the family, that the family is, you know, the ground. All the sacrifice you do for the family and the family sticks together. I think that's what I love about the Vietnamese and Asian culture."* In the case of Lan (S.G.), she said that her mother was very afraid that her brother, who was born in Norway,

"*would find a girlfriend that was not Vietnamese, but Norwegian. She just had this idea that Norwegians, that they wouldn't find much time with families, they divorce easily and the communication would be difficult. She was a little bit afraid and she talked to me about that. But I said to her 'Mom, the most important thing is that he's happy so you shouldn't look too much into that'. And after talking to her for a while, she came to the same conclusion."*

Another way the participants see themselves as different from Norwegian women is how they care for their elders *"that's why the [Vietnamese] elderly… are always living with their children, while the Norwegian families send them to homes where they don't have to take care of them. So, I think they [Vietnamese people] have great respect for the elders. Family values were like a big thing, always"* (S.G.).

A part of being family-oriented is the Vietnamese women sacrificing their wants and desires for their family. Such sacrifice come in many different forms. This could be doing more of the household chores or being the primary care taker of the children. Amongst the six second-generation participants, many of those who have children tend to agree with their mothers' sentiment as long as they do receive some type of help from their spouse. Linh (S.G.) believes that is natural for her to care and make decisions regarding her children because

> *"we [Norwegian husband and I] have a conflict about our child…. My mom used to decide everything about the children and my dad had no say. That's what I'm used to but that's not how it is in Norway and he says, 'You cannot decide because they're* our *children, they're not* your *child and I'm like, 'Yeah, they're our children but* I *am the mother' [but he says] 'And I'm the father.' I did not, at the time, understand what he meant but now, I do understand that was a trait my mother taught me."*

When it comes to sacrificing one's own desire for the family, Loan (S.G.) said that her parents often reminded her of the of the women's role and expressed that,

> *"Even though I've moved here [to Norway], I still have the image of harmony but that harmony doesn't mean that anything the man does, the woman will do exactly the same. The harmony is about respecting each other but we also know that god made women instinctually better at caring for the family and the home than men."*

Le (S.G.) felt that her mother taught her different dimensions of sacrifice by saying that, *"What she taught – something that I am happy she taught me – is a woman's persistence and patience."* Thus, the second-generation found that they learned from their family members – particularly their mothers – that the role of a woman is important in the family when it comes to caring for the family's wellbeing and household. These are the same values that most of the first-generation recounted as important to transfer to their daughters.

However, the second-generation participants explained that their mother also taught them values from their own experience but which were in line with what they considered as

Norwegian. For one, some of the participants explained that their mother told them to not let men take advantage of them. Take Ly's (S.G.) mother for example. She recalled that her mother told her and her sister, *"'Don't do what I did. Don't just get married to anyone and take shit from them', you know, because she felt like she didn't get a lot of help from our dad when we were younger so she felt like she had to take care of everything."* Linh's (S.G.) mother also always taught her that she should not let men belittle her and that she should be independent. She explained that perhaps her mother felt like this because when she was in Vietnam, women were dominated by men. However, her independence caused Linh (S.G.) some issues as well, *"But the independence, it can be troublesome because it's a strong value in me and I don't like—I kind of have problems at work if I get dominated [and am told] 'You have to do this', I feel like 'Argh! Why do I have to? I don't have to do anything!'"* Loan (S.G.) felt her ability to sacrifice as much as her mother was compromised *"because I grew up in this [Norwegian] society and secondly, I have a father that knows how to share the workload with my mom. But if I wasn't lucky and didn't have a husband like that… I can't stand a husband like that. [a husband that just lets the wife do everything at home] (laughs)."* One of the participants, Le (S.G.), though, found that her family was much more traditional in roles than the rest of the participants but posited that her mother still shaped her independence by allowing her to go places after school behind her father's back. Le's mother tried to give her more freedom when her father restricted her actions to the traditional roles explained earlier.

Once again, even though some of the participants said that this form of cultural transmission of gender was due to their parents' experiences in Vietnam, some also said that if their mother had not moved to Norway, this idea of equality or independence would not have occurred to them. This was the case for Ly (S.G.) and Le (S.G.) who basically said that if they had not moved here, their mother would not have realized their potential to be equal to men or independent from men. Ly (S.G.) said that the sharing of household chores in the family between men and women was unfamiliar to her mother and joked, *"My mom didn't learn anything about equal rights [in Vietnam]. 'Equal Rights? What's that?' (Laughs). She told me she was very surprised when she came here and saw all the women were working."* For Le (S.G.) she could tell her mother was becoming more independent because, *"She talks back to my dad now, she's very independent today and she can go out shopping for herself. That's nothing she ever did before. She would only buy for her children first and then her husband before she would ever buy herself anything. So, I'm very happy to see that [she is taking care of herself]."* As such, the

second-generation participants saw that their mothers were influenced by Norwegian gender norms by the type of values of independence they imparted on them.

8.2.1 Cultural Transmission to Second-generation Vietnamese Men

The first-generation mostly ascertain that they believe they raise their sons as equally as their daughters. It is interesting that the first generation try to teach their sons traits they see as predominantly female. They posit that they may have different perceptions of their sons than their daughters but for the most part, they want their son to care for their family and take care of the home, just like their daughters. Such as Trinh (F.G.), who said that she has *"one son that's good at cooking, the other, not so much but of course, this isn't something we want to force on children."* Yet this seems not to be a shared sentiment by all those in the Vietnamese community even if the participants see it that way; Tuyet (F.G.) said, *"I'm not like other Vietnamese people. If they see the boy cook for the girl, they don't like that, they really don't like that. I think that if he cooks for a girl, he cares for her."*

From the perspective of the second-generation participants, most of those who have brothers find that their parents teach the same things to their brother that they teach to their daughters and thus, do not seem to see that there is too much of a difference between themselves and their brothers. The parents made a point to teach the sons tasks that would normally be taught to girls in Vietnam. Most of the second-generation participants, also not going too in depth about how their brother was raised, expressed that similar sentiments to Lan (S.G.) that, *"The values she [my mother] taught me, I think she tried to teach my brothers."* Despite being a little more lenient on her brothers when it came to some tasks, Lieu (S.G.) tried to explain that, *"It's always hard to analyze what is not gender or is gender related because my brothers and I are not identical."* She believes that, despite their differences, her parents taught them similarly. Loan (S.G.) also explained that *"I also have one younger brother, they also want him to know this, to share the work and that not only girls should [do the household work or caring for the children] so that when he has a family, he knows how to share the workload."* Therefore, even though they do not believe that their brothers have to embody the sacrifices that they learned from their mother, their brothers are capable of taking on the tasks that is deemed as typically feminine. Thus, the interplay of male and female gender dynamics becomes less noticeable for the participants, despite certain thoughts of how men and women are different.

In sum, the first-generation thought it was important for their daughters to learn the value of putting family before themselves. From what the second-generation have said, it seems that

these were the values they feel have been socialized into them. Interestingly, cultural transmission of tasks typically for women were also transferred to their brothers as well. This was because the first-generation believed these were necessary skills for their sons in order to help the family. However, not all the cultural transmissions were Vietnamese-based. Many of the second-generation women believed their mother taught them to not be dependent or vulnerable to men and to stand up for themselves – traits that contrasted Vietnamese gender norms that expected women to be submissive to men.

8.3 The Prevalence of Intergenerational Conflict

For many of the participants – both first and second-generation – they mainly expressed that there was not a lot of intergenerational conflict when it came to cultural transmission of gender norms from mother to daughter. This could stem from the fact that the first-generation participants appeared to be fairly open-minded as perceived from both the first and second-generation women. The participants explained that they had "normal", upbringing conflicts, such as how long the second-generations could stay out with their Norwegian friends. Some would deny any conflicts at all like Thao (F.G.), who said, *"No, we don't argue. We don't even shout because she's proper. Nothing to yell about."* Thuy (F.G.) explained that her daughter would stay out really late when she was younger and not informing her. Thuy (F.G.) said she confronted her daughter about it often and *"this situation has happened so many times and she was usually frustrated about that so we exchanged a few words but then we're on good terms."* This did not strike her as a gender conflict because she said she did the same with her son.

However, one of the first-generation participant posited that there was a type of conflict with her youngest daughter, who was not a participant in the interviews. Tien (F.G.) explained that *"The first two girls born in Vietnam, they understand me [understand the values] more because they lived there with me longer so they are more like me. The one who was born here, I see that she's much more different in how she thinks."* This daughter questions the cultural transmissions of womanhood more often than the first two daughters. This could be because the first two daughters, having lived in Vietnam for a much longer period, was more familiar with the Vietnamese conception of womanhood than her third daughter about whom Tien (F.G.) explained that it is *"because she goes to school in Norway so learns the Norwegian way more than what I teach at home."* Due to these differences, some of the first-generation participants said that they had to change their way of raising their girls. Their main tactic was to tell their daughters why they did not want them to do a certain thing. If they did not listen and still did

it, they hoped that they would learn. Tien (F.G.) said of her youngest daughter, *"whatever she does wrong, she needs to fix it herself…. I try to teach them [all my children] so I tell them rather than yell at them… because I want to give them my experience but if they use it, it's up to them."* Trang (F.G.) explained, *"We have to make exceptions in order to live with our children and eventually, their children."*

For two of the second-generations, they mentioned that there was also some form of conflict in their home. From the lesser case, Lieu (S.G.) explained that though both her parents were 'modern' in how they raised her, she deemed that *"I feel like I have to fight a bit more with my dad than my mom about expectations for me as a woman."* These "fights", though, never seemed to turn into substantial conflicts, as she described that her father was able to tolerate changing gender norms. In the more extreme case, Le (S.G.) recalled that her parents were very traditional and though they had become more accepting of "modern" gender roles, she often found herself in internal conflict with them when it came to gender roles, especially when she was younger. Similar to Lieu (S.G.), she found that her father was much stricter in reinforcing gender roles. However, the reinforcement was more extreme to the point that she felt that her mother was caught in between. She explained that,

> *"When I was living with her, because my dad was always there, she never… she did not have the courage to talk against him so whatever he wanted, she would do it. [If my dad and I were ever in conflict] I know she would take my side if he wasn't there. But then again, I'm not the type to make my mom choose between me and my dad because I know I would make it harder for her if I do… or say something that I know my dad wouldn't like. So I would, you know, bite my tongue and shut up because I don't want my mom to get in the middle because I know that when they go to bed, she's the one who will hear him complain a lot and I don't want her to go through that.*"

While she found that most of her conflict was with her father, she still did not agree with some of her mother's idea of womanhood, saying that *"The woman's place is at home, that is not what I want. I think the women and the men are responsible for the house as much as the women."* In both cases, the two participants showed that conflict, no matter how long it existed, was primarily with their father. These two cases, and particularly Le's (S.G.), were anomalies amongst the participants when it came to discussing intergenerational conflict in the cultural transmission of gender norms. This, however, does not mean the cases were anomalies throughout the Vietnamese community in Bergen. The second-generation did talk vividly about

the "others" in the community who appeared to have these intergenerational conflicts about gender in the family. This is the main concentration of the next section of this chapter.

8.3.1 "The Others"

The majority of the second-generation participants did not see intergenerational conflict about gender norms in their own lives[11]. They spoke in great length about the prevalence of such conflicts among their siblings and friends. Ly (S.G.), for example, talked about her older sister who had more conflict when it came to gender norms. She recalled her mother often telling her sister,

> *"my sister, she's a messy person so when she moved in with her partner, she was very messy and stuff so my mother told her,* 'That's *not ladylike, you're too messy, you have to clean up after yourself' or 'nobody wants to live with you, you have to cook.'"*

During her sister's younger years, her parents had the most problems with her because she broke a lot of traditional gender norms, something which Ly (S.G.) considered as paving the way to their parents being easier on herself as she was growing up. As previously mentioned, Lan (S.G.) explained that she saw there was more conflict with her husband's family who was much more traditional than her family. She explained that in her husband's family, his sister had to stay in the kitchen whereas the brothers were not allowed in the kitchen but exercised their freedom to do anything else they wanted. Due to their traditional attitudes, she found herself more in conflict with them because she did not agree with their way of thinking and spoke against it. She also saw that in other families, there was conflict but that the daughters, *"mostly give up and do what their parents want."*

Some of the participants also spoke about how their friends' parents were very strict on them because they were girls. It was harder for them to go out and hang out with their Vietnamese friends because they were expected to do the housework. While there are those who argued with their parents, most just succumbed to what their parents expected of them. This did not, however, stop the "others" from expressing their frustration to the participants. When it came to peers her age when she was younger, Loan (S.G.) remembered *"I saw that a lot of families that had kids similar to me, growing up here. There were many who went home, my friends had to take care of all the housework, food, drinks and they aren't allowed to go out. They don't dare to go out."* When Linh (S.G.) talked about the "others", she said that her girl friends had

[11] However, these sentiments was harder to gauge from the first-generation as they avoided talking about the experiences of the others.

so much more conflict and would complain, *"'Oh we have to do everything and my brother, he doesn't have to do anything!'"* She explained that they also tried to protest in other ways by asking Linh to help them by lying to their father because they were scared of their father's reaction. Aside from these complaints, Linh recalled that she did not understand why her friends were so restricted and said that,

> *"the older my friends became, the more often they fought at home. When they were 11-12, they disagreed, at 14, 15, and 16, that's when there were a lot of fighting. Sometimes they were crying…. A couple others were depressed and cried a lot. They envied me, saying I was so lucky…. I don't think their brothers needed to do things in secrecy because what they did was more acceptable."*

The experiences of the "others" show that intergenerational conflict when it comes to cultural transmissions of womanhood exist. Perhaps the reasons why the participants I interviewed, for the most part, did not see themselves as part of a gender conflict has to do with the sampling strategy elaborated upon in chapter 4. My contact person introduced them to me, and thus, they may share similar experiences to one another. Another reason could be that the participants did not want to talk about their own conflicts due to the topic's sensitive nature. Family conflicts are usually not shared with others – especially strangers. Despite these explanations, it is clear that this type of intergenerational conflict did occur among Vietnamese immigrant families. All the second-generation participants had witnessed or heard about it and could elaborate extensively about examples from their own immediate family (siblings) or from their friends.

8.4 Conclusion

When it comes to the cultural transmission of womanhood, the first-generation participants wanted to teach their daughter what they believe is a Vietnamese norm. They wanted to teach their daughters how to prioritize the family before themselves and to be family-oriented. The participants also posited that they taught their sons the same values. The daughters found themselves identifying with this transmission but they were also taught the importance of being independent from men and to not uncritically submit to patriarchal norms. Since the mothers seemed to be okay with the daughters adopting Norwegian gender norms, the participants hardly had any gendered conflict. Since others frequently had these types of conflict, it seems that gendered intergenerational conflict is prevalent among the Vietnamese community in Bergen.

9 Discussion

This chapter will explicitly engage the empirical findings with the research question and discuss my findings based upon the discussed Theoretical Framework (Ch. 2) and Literature Review (Ch. 3). The structure of this chapter will be based upon the specific research questions that were presented in the Introduction (Ch. 1). Therefore, there will be several separate sections to discuss the participants acculturation assessments, impact and influence of gender from Vietnam and Norway, cultural transmission of gender and intergenerational conflict. The discussion will also compare the findings to other research on gender in Vietnamese communities in order to situate the contribution within the field.

9.1 Acculturation Assessment

Migration is done for a purpose. As discussed in the theory chapter on acculturation, migration could be caused by economic, political or social factors. The first-generation participants, and their children who were born in Vietnam, fled Vietnam because of the volatile environment which inhibited their freedoms and opportunities. They were the first to establish a Vietnamese community abroad (Baldassar et al., 2017). Such freedoms and opportunities, the participants expressed, included whether or not they could find work, get an education, how they raised their children, or how their family was treated by the authoritarian state. For some, they found their husbands or fathers jailed or forced to go to war. My first research sub-question was directed to

> *How do the study participants assess the first-generation participants acculturation into Norwegian society?*

Under the four acculturation tactics proposed by Berry and his colleagues (1989), *assimilation, integration, separation,* and *marginalization,* the participants in this study believe that they have properly integrated. Integration is when the immigrants attempt to maintain their own cultural identity while also adopting the host society's values (Berry, 2003; Berry et al., 1989, 2006; Berry & Sam, 1997; Bhatia & Ram, 2001; Ward, 2008). This entails that they have been both maintaining their own culture and actively engaged in the host society. This refers back to the spectrum of *cultural maintenance* and *contact and participation* in the host country as discussed by Berry and his colleagues (1989), Berry and Sam (1997), and Ward (2008). When the participants began to hold events that were related to Vietnamese traditions like *Tet* or their National Independence Day, this was a significant way in which cultural maintenance took place. The collective desire of the community to put on such events came from the fact that

they missed the homeland. This also became an important way for the Vietnamese community in Bergen to keep in touch and to maintain their ties to Vietnam while they are living in Norway. This is the most obvious way that their cultural maintenance can be perceived from the outside. Furthermore, the involvement of the community plays a factor in cultural maintenance as well. There were also imperatives to be involved with the community since they supported each other and the newly arrived refugees. In fact, this is also a way for the community to reinforce "appropriate" behavior within the community, therefore, possibly reinforcing maintenance of their Vietnamese culture.

The first-generation participants mainly spoke about transitioning into a different lifestyle that revolved around social life and acclimating to the weather. From one place to another, when they first came, the participants explained that the social transition was difficult because the social environment was less open. Integrating into a society that was foreign to them was so challenging that some of the second-generation participants recalled that their parents often wanted to leave Norway. Part of the difficulty was when it came to getting a job without knowing Norwegian. It took years for some of the participants to settle down and get a job. Furthermore, it seems that once the participants and their spouses were employed, the possibility of integration became more realistic to them. In any case, the participants only briefly mention the hardship it took them to successfully integrate. From the participants' explanation, there were also services that were provided by the state to aid their transition to Norway. Thus, the desire to integrate into Norwegian society is shown in their desire to make use of the services provided to them, learning the language and working in Norwegian society. This way, they were able to better understand how the society functioned and the particular ways in which it was different to Vietnam.

When it comes to contact with and participation with the host society, I believe that choosing integration (as opposed to assimilation, separation or marginalization) as a strategy was their best chance at survival in a foreign land. According to the participants, at the time of arrival to Bergen, the Vietnamese community was relatively small. Integration in their eyes was a way to smoothly transition from one country to another. Language ended up being the main reason why they believed they integrated because it helped them be understood by Norwegians and get a job in Norway. Even so, participation in the work force does not necessarily mean a stable relationship with Norwegians as was posited by a couple of the first-generation participants. Therefore, for some, their "integration" is not complete integration as their social contact with Norwegians is limited even if they do work with them. The first-generation's idea of integration

is just making sure that they can function comfortably within Norwegian society even if they do not form close ties with the Norwegians. This is similar to the research done by Inman and her colleagues (2007), who found that the Asian-Indian community in the U.S. selective of which aspects of the dominant culture they wanted to incorporate, while maintaining their core cultural values. This is also the case for the first-generation participants in this study as they chose to learn enough to function independently in Norway, but without maintaining too much social contact with the Norwegians themselves.

According to the participants, there appeared to be a gendered dimension to acculturation. While their integration to society might be limited, three of the second-generation participants seem to think that the first-generation women integrated better than the first-generation men. This is due to their mastery of the language, as they were able to attend Norwegian classes, and their subsequent entry to the working life. This points to a better *sociocultural* adaptation than their male counterparts. The only term that is applicable to this discussion is sociocultural adaptation as the participants do not really talk about their life satisfaction and mental well-being. *Sociocultural* adaptation is therefore based on how well the participants are socially functioning in the society they have settled in (Berry, 2003; Güngör & Bornstein, 2013; David L. Sam & Berry, 2010; Ward & Kus, 2012). The participants expressed that some of the men appeared to struggle with accepting their new life once they arrived to Norway, stemming from their lowered status in Norway compared to in Vietnam. It was particularly hard for some Vietnamese men to accept and adapt to the new lifestyle since they had highly esteemed jobs back in Vietnam. Perhaps this was due to the fact that they could no longer afford a middle-class living standard for their families, like Kibria (1990) postulated, especially because Vietnamese men were the main financial provider and could no longer assume that role solely in Norway.

In sum, the acculturation process among Vietnamese immigrants reflect a willingness to integrate into Norwegian society. Integration, however, was a multifaceted process with a gendered dimension. Women learnt the language faster and thus utilized this as a leeway to more opportunities both in work and in society more broadly. Blending in completely was not desired among these women; they simply could not just throw away their whole entire lives up to that point and start over. Thus, the effort to balance their own lifestyle with that of the dominating culture in Norway was a recipe for success. In relation to the research sub-question, the first-generation women acculturated successfully by striking the right balance of retaining their own values and traditions and integrating into Norwegian society.

9.2 Gender Perceptions and Gender Influences

On the basis of the two cultural representations of gender from Vietnam and Norway (Ch. 1.2.), the participants were able to compare what similarities and differences existed between the two and how their roles as women were impacted by it. Coming from Vietnam, the first-generation participants left at a time where women mainly took on the role of home care-taker and were expected to behave in a submissive manner to those around them. Upon arrival to Norway, even though women appeared to assume a similar role to that of Vietnamese women, they had much more autonomy. The literature written on gender in the Vietnamese community (Ch. 3.4.) show that first-generation Vietnamese women tend to advocate traditional gender roles by enforcing them more rigidly than it was in the homeland (Barber, 2017; Kibria, 1990; Nguyen, 2008). Particularly in the Nordic countries, Liebkind (1996) argues that immigrant women were most likely to oppose their children's acculturation into Western society. Based on these understandings of how foreign gender impacts the Vietnamese women, I posed the question:

> *How do the first- and second-generation participants perceive Vietnamese and Norwegian gender norms, and the influence these gender norms have on their daily life?*

9.2.1 Gendered Expectations from Vietnam

If we refer back to West and Zimmerman's (1987) definition of gender as the social construction in which people "do" gender by acting out what is expected of them, this can be applied to the situation when the participants first arrived to Norway around the 1970s. Having come from a gendered society where men and women appeared to belong in separate spheres, with women staying at home and men going to work, this was not so different in Norway at the time. This brings to mind the public-private sphere distinction in gender studies which historically place men in the public sphere and women in the private sphere (Eckert, 1997; Hare-Mustin, 1988; Iversen & Rosenbluth, 2010; Potuchek, 1992; Warner, 2015).

In the recollections that the first-generation provided, they seem to believe that the Vietnamese culture emphasizes these gendered differences between men and women more strongly than the Norwegian culture. This is in line with what Costa et al. (2001) posit – that magnitude in gender difference vary in some cultures, and in this case, the perceived gender differences in Vietnam were magnified whereas those in Norway were less so. The second-generation also perceived traditional Vietnamese gender norms relatively the same way as their mothers. Vietnamese women, appear to have a stricter way to behave; they have to be gender traditional in attitude and behaviour, watchful of how they dress. These perceptions spanned across time and

geography as the second participants felt that these were things their parents tried to teach them as well. Furthermore, most of the first-generation talked about how Vietnamese women, before they immigrated, were at a disadvantageous position because they were financially reliant and subordinate to their husbands. Coming to Norway, they had the perception that women here were respected and equal to their husbands, regardless of whether the husband supported them financially. Even if the husbands did support them financially, they appeared not be constrained by it.

The government institutions from the two countries seemed to provide different levels of support as well. The first-generation participants believed that the Norwegian government provided a higher level of support to women and helped protect them, whereas they felt that women were not protected in Vietnam at the time they left. While the women from both cultures initially shared the same type of responsibilities such as taking care of the domestic sphere, the way the participants described the Vietnamese women, Norwegian women had more autonomy than their Vietnamese counterpart, who were supposed to be completely subordinated to the men in their lives. Thus, the Confucianist values dictating gender norms prevailed among Vietnamese immigrants in Norway. These values stress the submission of women to men, relating to the studies by Duong (2001), Knodel et al. (2005), and Marino (1998) on gender roles in the family.

Gendered influences begin from childhood and for many of the first-generations, they said they simply followed their parents' rules. These rules can be understood as a way parents teach their children to fit the roles society has set for them and to recognize what gendered symbols are culturally appropriate. Socialization can occur, not only as what is taught, but also through the observations the participants make from childhood and beyond (Connell & Pearse, 2014; Fausto-Sterling, 2012; West & Zimmerman, 1987). From the first-generation's accounts, children were socialized to only worry about the family, leaving the financial burden to the boys or men in the family. They were taught how to behave in a manner that was considered as "appropriate" such as being polite and quiet. This, however, reflects another gendered dimension. There was a difference in norms and values guiding girls' and boys' behaviour. Participants observed that their brothers appeared to get in less trouble for staying out late, engaging in rowdy behaviour, or consuming alcohol. This served as a way of socializing the children to behave a certain way as they were being disciplined differently from their male counterparts.

However, disagreements were also apparent in the narrative of first-generation of their own parent-daughter relations. Parents of the first-generation participants did not always agree on all aspects of what the first-generation as young girls/women should do. For several of the first-generation's parents, their mothers were substantially more traditional than their fathers, adamant that their daughters would stay home and help care for the family. The fathers, on the other hand, encouraged their girls to go to school, normally what was considered a pursuit for men.

Therefore, within the family, traditional role maintenance was not strongly enforced by the parents. It seems that the first-generation participants did not strongly adhere to the gendered institution that existed when they lived in Vietnam because they were encouraged to take on less traditional pursuits. Most of the first-generation did not see their upbringing as traditional but even so, they were still raised within the parameters of what they considered as traditional Vietnamese roles. Thus, they imparted to their daughters somewhat traditional gender roles and expectations rendered acceptable in Vietnam.

9.2.2 Changing Gender Norms in Norway

By moving to Norway, certain aspects of their lives changed such as the environment they found themselves in and the people around them. The participants saw Norwegian women as more independent than they were. As they continued to live in Norway, their daughters also became exposed to Norwegian gender norms. They were taught that they were equal to the boys and this was something that first-generation participants also noticed in their daily life. Most of the first-generation participants were unanimous with their observation that Norwegian women were *too* independent and individualistic, thinking too much about their own advancement in life than caring for their family. They also believe that Norwegian women are too free to engage in activities considered improper, such as drinking or staying out late. These activities can be interpreted as symbols that define femininity or masculinity. When the first-generation participants lived in Vietnam, these activities were in fact deemed suitable and expected of men. On the contrary, a woman engaged in such activities would shame the family and in the worst case, be unsuitable for marriage. Individuals enact what is deemed appropriate in their cultural setting (Connell & Pearse, 2014; Crehan, 2015; Potuchek, 1992; Risman, 2004, 2009), and for the first-generations, what they believed Norwegian women doing were contrary to what they were used to in Vietnam. These acts were deemed appropriate for men but unsuitable for women.

Those who were once stay-at-home moms eventually had to work to help support their family in Norway, but despite this, they did not feel as if their gendered role changed much. The first-generation participants still took care of the children, still did the grocery shopping, still maintained the home, but many were quick to say that their husbands were capable of helping out at home too. This was a change in the prevailing gender norms experienced in Vietnam as some of the participants' husbands helped with cleaning, the cooking, and caring for the children.

However, for a couple of the participants, their family maintained traditional Vietnamese roles quite strongly. This means that their household took on a dual-breadwinner characteristic but the mothers were still in charge of taking care of the home. This relates to a quantitative study by Lopez-Zafra and Garcia-Retamero (2012) on gender and social change of women in Spain that argues that even though men are starting to share the role of caretaker, women are still doing most of the domestic work. The second-generation posited that many of their mothers enjoyed their roles regardless of whether their mothers maintained the traditional roles or changed gendered roles when they arrived in Norway. Even though the first-generation participants did not perceive a change within themselves, some of their daughters did. Perhaps compared to what they have heard about traditional Vietnamese norms, the primary change some of the second-generation participants saw of their mother was that they had become more outspoken and able to stand up for themselves against the men in their lives.

In a qualitative study on the Vietnamese community in America, Marino (1998, p. 94) found that the women were willing to incorporate "their newfound independence, power, and ability to question the patriarchy… into the traditional family system." Even though the first-generation participants in this study were raised in a time and place where women were supposed to behave a certain way and do certain things, since they moved to Norway, they could freely decide what aspect of womanhood they desired after becoming exposed to different aspects of Norwegian womanhood. Though several of the first-generation participants argued they were not impacted by the changing gender norms, the women appeared to have gained more autonomy in Norway than in Vietnam. As with acculturation, they sought to strike a balance between traditional gender norms bestowed upon them by their parents in Vietnam and the new and increasingly equal gender norms in the Norwegian context.

Their daughters, however, varied more in how they saw Norwegian gender norms. Much like what Killian (2011), Portes and Rumbaut (2014), Shwartz et al. (2011) argued, those who migrate at a younger age can more easily integrate into the host society than those who migrate

at an older age. This is as much applicable to the first-generation as it is for the second-generation. To start off, for one second-generation participant, though she did not participate in activities such as drinking with her Norwegian friends, she did not see them as too excessive. For another three, they were rather neutral about it, sometimes finding themselves similar to Norwegian women when it came to going out. The last two perceived Norwegian women to have too much freedom.

I would argue that age is an important factor shaping these different perceptions and on how much the second-generation were able to acculturate into Norwegian gender norms. For the last two participants, they arrived in Norway when they were older than the others whom were either born in Norway or about one year old when they arrived. These two grew up in Vietnam and left for Norway when they were in their pre-teen to teenage years. Therefore, they were already exposed to the Vietnamese traditional gender norms, both from within the family and the Vietnamese society. Thus, they were more inclined to preserve them. As such, they ended up having the perceptions of gender norms that conformed more to that of the first-generation.

However, the two participants that migrated to Norway at an older age were more capable than their parents to integrate better because they were still young and easily influenced. Though the first-generation participants thought they were young when they migrated to Norway, they had lived in Vietnam for a long enough time to more rigidly adopt Vietnamese gender norms.

The other four had less exposure to the Vietnamese gender norms and therefore, see themselves more similar to Norwegian girls than the others did. When it comes to their social activities, these four second-generation renegotiated which act was symbolic of the gender they define themselves as, in order to make it suitable for themselves in Norway. This is reminiscent of the qualitative research Stritikus and Nguyen (2007) conducted on second-generation Vietnamese girls in America which found the girls redefining and expanding the definitions of what makes themselves considered as good or bad girls based on their social circumstances. In the Norwegian case, this holds true for those who were born in Norway, but less so for the second-generation who experienced their first years of childhood in Vietnam.

Regardless of how they got to Norway, the second-generation participants assess themselves to be impacted by the Norwegian gender norms, unlike their parents. Some deemed themselves as having less perseverance than their mothers when it came to sacrificing themselves for the family. On a broader scale, they do not express the desire to maintain rigid traditional Vietnamese gender norms. This is contrary to Hoang's (2016) findings that migrant, Vietnamese

women in Taiwan believed they must prioritize and sacrifice their own needs for the family – even if they are working. This comes from the fact that some of the second-generation participants of this study say that they cannot accept that their husband refuse to take part in the housework because they are also working women. A few participants reject taking on both the burden of working *and* taking care of the home whereas they saw their mothers as happy or willing to take on most of the domestic work in addition to having paid employment. Though they did not consider themselves as selfish, they believed that they thought more about themselves and about notions of equality. As such, the second-generation have acculturated more to the Norwegian gender norms than their parents and they attribute it to several things, including the constant exposure to the Norwegian society (particularly its gender norms) as young children through social contact with Norwegian children at school, school teachings, and most importantly, parental support.

9.3 Cultural Transmission

The fact that the daughters perceive themselves as thinking more about equality and fairness than their parents, I would argue, has as much to do with acculturating to Norwegian gender standards as with what their mothers transmit to them as culturally appropriate. The first-generation women, while admiring Norwegian women's independence, appear to fear that Norwegian women are completely unrestricted, doing whatever they want. Most noticeably, they felt that Norwegian women did not care enough about their family because they were more concerned about their own personal advancement and enjoyment. This fear also shaped the type of values of womanhood that the first-generation participants wanted to transfer to their daughters. In the following, I will discuss the research sub-question:

> *What cultural notions of womanhood do the first-generation participants want to transmit to their daughters?*

Having moved to Norway and perceiving Norwegian women like so, it triggers their *cultural transmission motive* which Mchitarjan and Reisenzein (2015) explained as a motive that migrants have to retain cultural identity from the homeland. The motive in this particular situation was to transmit the importance of family values, especially sacrificing oneself for the family. This appears to be transmitted to many of the second-generation as they observed that their family was substantially family-oriented. But they do not give the same explanations or examples of what makes them much more family oriented because different components of familial sacrifice were transmitted to them. One example is having the family elders live with

them rather than sending them to an elderly home and another is having the mother doing the household chores. Some participants from both generations expressed that women are instinctively better at doing household chores and so it makes sense to them that women would be responsible for these chores. Smith et al. (2008) suggests that cultural transmission is based on personal preferences of the person transmitting the gender norms. This implies that the aforementioned Vietnamese values are the ones the first-generation identified the most with and why they chose these gender norms to be transfer to their daughters. One of the main components of sacrifice is motherly duties – to care for the child selflessly – but this is a component that only applies once the participants actually have children.

The socialization of womanhood varied between the families but even so, they were still under the confines of what is considered as traditional gender norms as most of these acts or chores are related to the domestic sphere. This runs parallel to the qualitative study by Zhou and Bankston III (2001, p. 135) that posits that Vietnamese-American women are still influenced by the "beliefs and values about family and gender stemming from the old homeland". First generation participants in Norway sought to transmit traditional Vietnamese family values to their daughters. As discussed previously, however, all families differ in the type of gender norms that the parents actually enforce at home.

For the second-generation, they were also impacted by what their father was transmitting to them. Traditional gender norms in Vietnam suggest that Vietnamese women do *all* the housework but for most of the participants, their father took on some of the housework. They may not do as much as their mothers but the fathers do help take care of the domestic sphere. This transmitted to them the value of having men help around the home and like one of the participant said previously, it would be hard for her to accept a spousal partnership with someone who did not help at home. What was previously defined as a woman's role, has been renegotiated in the family, blurring the lines between what is masculine and what is feminine. This cultural transmission has made many of the second-generation participants pursue more equal family relationships.

It is important to note that not all the cultural transmissions were merely of Vietnamese values. Though the first-generation participants disapproved of how some Norwegian women behaved, they admired the equality and respectability that Norwegian women seemed to have when compared to men. Tied to the perception of men being helpful in the home, some second-generation participants felt that their mother transmitted to them that they should not allow men to take advantage of them or be too reliant on them. This was verbalized as well as observed by

the second-generation who saw their mothers argue with their fathers and doing things for themselves that is not always beneficial for the family unit.

As the first-generation teaches their daughter to question male power, this is contrary to what authors such as Kibria (1990, p. 10) and Zhou and Bankston III (2001, p. 141) argue of the first-generation Vietnamese women in the U.S. While the authors hold that the women believed they had new resources to deal with male authority and decision-making powers in the home, these women also believed that male authority should not be directly contested. When it comes to cultural transmission – even if it is not obvious to many of the mothers – a couple of their daughters seem to believe that if their mothers had not come to Norway and been exposed to Norwegian gender norms, they would not be as independent as they are now. Thus, in this cultural transmission of being independent, for some of the first-generation, it shows that they have acculturated to the Norwegian society, even if they do not themselves think they have changed too much.

One interesting finding of cultural transmission is that, what was considered traditionally in the women's domain, most of the mothers have also taught their sons. Their daughters confirmed this as they could not always see a difference between themselves and their brother(s). The only difference some of them perceived was that they still were taught more about familial sacrifice than their brothers but that their brothers were taught to be helpful at home. It also makes it a little harder for the second-generation participants to separate the roles of what women should do and what men should do as their brothers were taught mostly the same things. This, of course, was something the participants said did not happen in all the families in the Vietnamese community.

According to Cavalli-Sforza and Feldman (1981), and Taylor and Thoth (2011), cultural transmission occurs in three different forms, *vertical*, *horizontal*, and *oblique*. What has been discussed here has mostly been about one-way *vertical* cultural transmission where the parents transmit culturally desired values to their children. Both also experienced some form of *horizontal* cultural transmission. The second-generation were impacted by Norwegian children they went to school with. The first-generation – whether they realized it or not – were impacted by the Norwegian women who were around them when they first arrived. This could be seen in how the daughters described some of the mothers as becoming more independent because they came to Norway. The second-generation face *oblique* cultural transmission because the Vietnamese community, as mentioned before, at times, police what is appropriate or not for Vietnamese girls or women in terms of what to wear or how to uphold the family name. This

corroborates Kibria's (1990) study, in which she found Vietnamese women in the community tend to use gossip as a way to regulate the behavior of those around them – males and females alike. Most of the participants were aware of this and expressed their distaste for it. Part of cultural transmission is the verbalization of what is desired but all the values and traits that the participants mentioned are also aspects that they have observed over the span of their life and thus, making the cultural transmission more possible. Cultural transmission is also about picking and choosing which values that should be transferred and in the case of this study, these were the values of familial sacrifice and not letting men dominate women. In sum, first-generation women wanted to transmit to their daughters a mixture of Vietnamese and Norwegian gender norms, that on the one hand emancipated their daughters, but on the other ensured a continuation of respect and valuation of the family unit.

9.4 Intergenerational Conflict

Not all cultural transmissions are received well and this can lead to intergenerational conflict. This often happens because normal family processes are interrupted once migrants move to a different society from their own (Choi et al., 2008). Based on the assumption that intergenerational conflict occurs due to differing views of gender roles, this research seeks address this problem by questioning:

> *When cultural transmission of womanhood happens, how do the participants handle the possible intergenerational conflict that occurs?*

Upon closer inspection, the conflicts that the participants argued were not gender based (such as going out until late at night), do in fact have a gendered dimension. When compared to the first-generation women, who were restricted to when, where and for how long they could go out in Vietnam, the second-generation participants refused to be restricted by or passively accept the same gendered expectations the first-generation had to face. Especially since the second-generation wanted to be with their friends who seemed to have permission to stay out late at night. This is part of the *horizontal* cultural transmission that they are impacted by, being socialized in Bergen. This can potentially lead to intergenerational conflict but this is hardly a necessary and sufficient condition for it to occur. I would argue that there is also an age dimension that plays into how and when conflict occur, or how the conflict is dealt with. Strategies second-generations can employ, according to Rasmi et al. (2014), are *obliging* their parents, *avoiding, dominating* or *integrating* with their parents. Referring to the acculturation process being influenced by age (Berry et al., 2006; Portes & Rumbaut, 2014; Schwartz et al.,

2010, 2011), some participants found that the children who migrated from Vietnam at an older age tended to argue less with their parents than the children that were infants when they moved to Norway or born in Norway. It could also factor into why, if these older second-generation participants had conflicts with their parents, they would choose to listen rather than engage in conflict. In this sense, they use the *avoidance* technique to ignore situations that could lead to possible conflict.

Intergenerational conflict also appeared to have a gendered component. Some of the participants explained that they felt they had to fight more with their dad when it came to their freedoms. They posited that their mothers were more open to Norwegian gender norms in comparison to their fathers. An exception was one of the participants who did not agree with the fact that a woman's place is mainly at home and this was a disagreement between her and her mother. When faced with these types of intergenerational conflict, even the first-generation participants are impacted by their children, causing a form of upward cultural transmission that is from the child to the parent. While they did not agree with the norms advocated by their children, they tended to adapt and to change the way they raised their children. Rather than expecting complete compliance from their daughters, the mothers had to find a different tactic that was more appropriate for raising girls in Norway. They seemed to understand that their own experiences were different from their daughters and thus that their relation would be different to what they had with their parents. When compared to Marino's (1998, p. 95) qualitative research, she came to a similar conclusion that, though Vietnamese migrant mothers in the U.S. may have different values than their children, they had to change their parenting style by giving their daughters freedom to manoeuvre their surroundings. This was a way of avoiding intergenerational conflict also in the Norwegian case.

Perhaps the participants felt reserved when it came to the subject of conflict within their family and thus, did want to discuss it with a stranger. However, many of the second-generation participants did talk about gendered intergenerational conflict, but among other Vietnamese families or their own extended family. They argued that, as young girls, their girl-friends were complaining that they were always doing tasks such as ironing clothes, preparing the meals, and other house chores, whereas their brothers were exempted. Some claimed that their friends had to do things in secrecy whereas their brothers did not have to hide their activities. Such activities were included hanging out with friends or being with their partners. Some fought back but to no avail, causing some to always seem depressed and without the motivation or being too scared to fight back. The "others" who experienced gendered intergenerational conflict

were likely to either *oblige* to their parents and do as they were told. A few would attempt to *dominate* their parents, meaning to argue against these gender norms. Some seemed to engage in a tactic of obliging their parents, yet pursue the contested activities behind their back, supporting the findings of Zhou and Bankston III (2001).

In sum, the participants were hesitant to say that intergenerational conflict, when it comes to womanhood, occurred in their family. If it did, it was very minimal. However, they spoke vividly of how such conflicts emerged amongst other the Vietnamese families and how these conflicts were dealt with. For most of the second-generation participants themselves, they did not feel like they had to employ too much of these tactics as their mothers were perceived to be rather open-minded. Many of the second-generation women believed that if there were any real conflict of gender transmissions, it was with their fathers, but even then, most of their fathers grew accustomed to the changes and did not restrict their freedom to express their preferred gender identities.

10 Gender in the Vietnamese Community: The Conclusion

The move to a foreign country with different values change how migrants live their lives. For the participants of this study, migrating to Norway produced challenges to their traditional Vietnamese norms. It also changed the environment that their children, particularly their daughters, grew up in, exposing them to more egalitarian norms and values. The two generations of women in Bergen chose different acculturation tactics to settle into their new life with the first-generation attempting to impart what they perceived as traditional, Vietnamese gender norms to their daughters. Thus, the overarching research question I posed for this was:

> *How has acculturation into Norwegian society impacted the cultural transmission of traditional, Vietnamese gender norms from the first-generation to the second-generation Vietnamese women?*

The first-generation participants in my research believe themselves to be integrated to Norwegian society just enough to be able to work and communicate with those in the country. When it comes to core values of womanhood, the first-generation participants thought that they were rather unchanged and thus, try to transmit traditional, Vietnamese gender norms to their daughters such as prioritizing family over their social life and career advancements. However, according to their daughters, most perceived their mothers to have been impacted by the Norwegian gender norms as some of the values that they transmitted to their daughters encouraged independence. Furthermore, while they feared their daughters becoming too free (i.e. unrestricted social activities, not caring enough for their family), they did not seem to restrict their daughter's actual freedom. They understood that they could not raise their daughters to be purely Vietnamese since they grew up with Norwegian influence. The second-generation participants had a similar perception, believing their mothers to be open to change, and for the most part, accepting of Norwegian gender norms.

Migrant mothers are often seen as the carriers of cultures and strict reinforcers of traditional gender norms (Güngör & Bornstein, 2013; Phinney & Vedder, 2006), but this study shows that second-generation participants saw their mothers as relatively open and accepting of Norwegian gender norms, despite having clear preferences of more traditional Vietnamese values. To be sure, intergenerational conflict based on cultural transmission of gender norms

did exist, but the extent of such conflicts were largely limited to how long the second-generation participants were allowed to go out.

When it comes to gender in the Vietnamese community, Stritikus and Nguyen (2007) and Zhou and Bankston III (2001) argued that Vietnamese parents feared their daughters were assimilating too much into the American culture and becoming improper, therefore, enforcing stricter regulations on their daughters. My findings show that this does not seem to be the case because the second-generation in Bergen saw that their mother allowed them to develop their own gendered identity. While the parents did try to exercise some form of control over their daughters, it was not to the point that the second-generation felt that their actions were severely restricted. Of course, the first-generation still tried to transfer core Vietnamese values of womanhood, such as sacrificing their independence for the family, but they also wanted their daughters to be able to stand up to themselves and put themselves on equal footing with men. In this sense, though they did not outright encourage it, the first-generation participants did not want their daughters to completely submit to the men, contrary to what Kibria (1990) posited. While the second-generation did feel that there were some double standards when it came to their brothers, it was not to the point that they felt dissatisfied with their gender roles in the family as their parents allowed them some freedom in the home. Therefore, it seems they did not have to negotiate or hide their actions from their parents, contrary to the findings of Zhou and Bankston III (2008).

It could be suggested that for my particular participants, acculturation did appear to have an effect on which gender norms that the first-generation wanted to transmit to their daughters. Similar to what Hauff and Vaglum (1997), and Kavli (2015) found, the first-generation did take advantage of the norms that benefitted them, such as being able to work in Norway but they were not completely opposed to their daughters adopting a Norwegian gender identity. This is a view that was corroborated by the second-generation women who argued that their parents were not so traditional as to want them to completely take on only Vietnamese gender norms. While it was true that the first-generation participants feared that the second-generation would become excessive in their drinking or putting their own career first, they still expressed that they supported their daughters in their endeavors, contrary to what Liebkind and colleagues (2004) found. Their research from Finland showed that Vietnamese second-generation girls experienced less support from their parents than the immigrant boys. In fact, because their daughters were adopting Norwegian values, the first-generation felt that they, too, had to

change in order to be included in their children's life and thus, changed the way they would have raised their children otherwise.

As the discussions indicate, the first-generation participants thought it was most important to transmit to their daughters a woman's value of putting her family before herself. This is because when the first-generation still lived in Vietnam, they were taught to take care of the family and the home. They were also taught to be thoughtful of those around them and to follow a strict set of rules that regulated what they could do outside the house. However, the first-generation participants tried to be open about what their daughters could, allowing them the freedom that they themselves did not have. This is because they felt that if they did not change the way they raised their daughters to fit their lifestyle in Norway, it would be difficult to be a part of their lives, given the constant external exposure to Norwegian gender norms. Some of the daughters, however, felt that their mothers were open to these changes because their mothers changed themselves. Exposure to Norwegian gender norms helped some of the participants to become more outspoken and independent as individuals. Some of them also seemed to think that their mother had less problems acculturating to Norwegian gender norms or accepting the lifestyle than their fathers did.

It was the amalgamation of the gender norms that the first-generation participants grew up with to how they perceived Norwegian gender norms impact on their own lives that impacted what they wanted their daughters to learn from them as Vietnamese women. The most important Vietnamese value of womanhood that the participants wanted to transmit to their daughter was to sacrifice themselves for the family. They deemed this to be mostly Vietnamese as they perceived Norwegian women as too independent and thought more about themselves than their family. Even if they perceived this, they did admire some of the qualities that Norwegian women possessed and wanted their daughters to learn them as well. This was the ability to speak up for themselves and to not be dependent on the men around them. These were also the traits that some of the first-generation also picked up themselves after moving to Norway. Therefore, specifically for the participants in this research, acculturation did impact the cultural transmission of gender norms from the first-generation to the second-generation.

In studying a small group of Vietnamese women from Vietnam in Bergen, my interviews have revealed that the first-generation participants appeared to be largely acceptive of their daughters adopting Norwegian values, even if they disagreed with these values. This finding was contradictory to the previous studies done on Vietnamese immigrants when it comes to the cultural transmission of gender by the first-generation. This is because the predominant

research on gender transmission has described first-generation Vietnamese women as enforcers of traditional gender norms, particularly of their daughters. However, for daughters who have been exposed to Western norms, this is a source of internal conflict. For the participants of this study, the cultural transmission of gender norms triggers minimal intergenerational conflict because the participants view the first-generation to be well acculturated into Norwegian society. Intergenerational conflict seems to occur only if the first-generation is restricting the daughter's abilities to explore her social surroundings. As such, my research shows that the Vietnamese women, both first- and second-generation, are not homogenous in how they react to the transmission of cultural gender norms. It depends on how well acculturated they are to the host society.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Interview Guide for First-Generation Participants

1. Background information
    a. ***When*** and ***why*** did you emigrate from Vietnam to Norway?
    b. Did you have children when you came to Norway?
        - If ***yes***, how old were they when you migrated to Norway? Did they come with you or after you came? If ***no***, when did you have kids after you came to Norway?
        - How old are your kids now? What are their genders?
    c. What was it like when you first came to Norway?
        - Did you have family here to help you settle down/ Did you have a Vietnamese community to support you then?
        - How is the Vietnamese community here? Do you guys have events together, meet often? How big is it?
        - How is living in Norway different to living in Vietnam?
    d. What is your occupation now?
    e. Where have you lived after you left Vietnam?
2. Gender
    a. When you lived in Vietnam, what was expected of you as a woman?
        - What were women expected to do in Vietnam? What values were important to be a woman compared to being a man?
        - As a woman, what did your parents expect of you?
            1. What did they expect you to do at home when you lived with them? What did they want for your future?
                a. To get married, to get a job, to have children? Why?
                b. How was a daughter supposed to behave at home? In public?
        - Do you have any siblings?
            1. If yes, are they male or female?
                a. If they are males, what did your parents expect of him? What values were instilled in him?
                b. Was there a difference in what they expected of your brother(s)?
            2. If no, can you tell me how the males your age were behaving? What was expected of them?
                a. What was the difference between women and men? Behavior, occupation, expectations?
        - Where you married in Vietnam?
            1. If ***yes***, what did your spouse expect of you when you lived in Vietnam? If ***no***, where you in a romantic relationship?
                a. If yes, what did your partner expect from you as a woman?
    b. How did moving to Norway impact your views on womanhood?
        - Did your family life change or did you retain the same role as when you lived in Vietnam?
        - Over time, did you noticed if there was a difference in how women in Norway were expected to act? Was there a difference in gender norms for women?

1. If ***yes***, what did you notice and can you explain why that was different from when you were in Vietnam? How did you feel about the change? Did you adapt, reject it? If ***no,*** what was similar about Norwegian gender norms?

3. Cultural Transmission of Womanhood
    a. Can you explain to me how you perceived what it meant to be a woman in Vietnam? How to act, behave?
    b. What Vietnamese values of womanhood do you want to pass on to your daughter?
        - Why these values? Why are they important to you?
    c. As a Vietnamese mother, what do you expect from your daughter? ***Behavior***?
        - Were these the same expectations your family in Vietnam showed you?
    d. If you (also) have a son, what do you expect for your son?
        - Can you explain what it means to be a man in Vietnam?
        - What of these values do you want to transmit to him?
    e. What do you perceive to be Norway's perception of gender?
    f. Were there Norwegian values you accepted into your life that you showed your daughter?
    g. What Norwegian values do you accept that you want your son to pick up on?
    h. How did you see your role when you lived together with your daughter/son/children? What was expected of you as a woman and a mother-by your child/ren and spouse?
4. Intergenerational Conflict
    a. When your daughter was growing up, was there a difference in how your daughter understood being a woman/female? How can you tell?
    b. How did you ***feel*** about it? How did you ***handle*** it?
        - Did you ***accept*** it, were there ***disputes***? If there were ***no disputes,*** how did you handle it/deal with it?
    c. How did your daughter react to the traditional gender norms from Vietnam as she grew up?
        - Did she ***accept it,*** did she ***ignore/rebel*** against it? Why do you think so?
        - If she ***reacted negatively***, how did that make you feel?
5. Gender Perception Summing up
    a. What do you like or dislike about both Vietnamese and Norwegian gender norms?
    b. When you lived in Vietnam, how did you view your role as a woman?
    c. Having lived in Norway now, has that view change or remain the same?
        - If ***yes,*** how did it change? What impacted you to make perceive yourself that way? If ***it remained the same***, why? What did you like/dislike about how women perceived themselves in Norway?

Appendix 2: Interview Guide for Second-Generation Vietnamese Women

1. Background information
    a. Where were you born?
        - If in ***Vietnam***, how old were you when you came to Norway? And why? If in ***Norway***, when did your parents emigrate to Norway? And why?
        - Do you have any relatives in Vietnam still?
    b. Was there a Vietnamese community here to help your family settle down?
        - Do you have any relatives here?
    c. What is your current role now? Are you working, still a student, etc?
2. Gender
    a. Growing up in a Vietnamese household, how did you perceive the role of women?
        - What was it that your parents expected of you as a Vietnamese female? As a daughter, how did your parents expect you to behave? At home? In public
        - What were some of the things you remember your parents saying or doing that reflected their views of women?
        - Was this reflective of their Vietnamese values?
    b. Growing up in Norway, how did you perceive the role of women?
        - How do you think Norwegians represented and perceived the gender norms for women?
            1. What did you like, dislike about it?
        - Was there a difference to how Norwegian society perceived women and how your parents perceived women? Why or why not? Can you give me examples of the differences?
        - If your parents perceived differences between Vietnamese and Norwegian gender norms for women, how did they react to it?
            1. Did they ***think it was okay*** or did they ***criticize it***?
        - If you were in a relationship, what do you think your partner expected from you, as a woman?
3. Cultural Transmission of Womanhood
    a. What are some of the Vietnamese values that your mother holds of what a woman should be or how they should behave?
        - Why do you suppose these are important to her?
    b. How did she try to transmit these values to you?
        - Did she mention if you did something "unwomanly"? For example, tell stories about what a woman is supposed to do, how Vietnamese women should behave?
        - How did she reflect the way a Vietnamese woman should live in how she behaves, talks? How did she enforce it?
    c. How did you feel about what she wanted you to learn about being a woman?
    d. Living in a Vietnamese household, how do you feel like you had to act while living with your family?
    e. How do you suppose the Norwegian gender norms impacted you? Where do you think that impact comes from? Social media, entertainment, friends, etc.?
    f. If you have a brother(s), what do you think was expected of him? Did your parents treat him differently? If so, how?

- What kind of Vietnamese values did your parents want him to follow as a Vietnamese man?
- Do you feel he had more or less pressure to conform to what your parents wanted?

g. If you have a sister(s), did you see they had the same expectation for your sister?
   - If no, what did they do differently?
   - If yes, can you explain the similarities?

h. In terms of your relationship, to your significant other, friends, do you think that these values have impacted the way you relate to them? Is it different from people whose family lived in Norway for many generations?

4. Intergenerational Conflict
   a. How did you feel about the Vietnamese traditional gender norms? What did you like/dislike?
   b. When you were growing up, was there a difference on how you perceived gender norms and identities from your mother?
      - If ***yes***, what were the differences? Did you find that you accepted or live more with the Norwegian gender norms?
   c. Did you have any problems with your parents/mother by having different values?
      - If ***yes,*** what sort of problems? If ***no,*** how did you guys deal with it?
5. Gender Perception
   a. Living with your family, how did you feel about your gender and how you were supposed behave?
   b. Growing up in Norway, how do you view your own gender identity? Do you find yourself leaning more towards the Vietnamese way, Norwegian way, in-between, or neither?
   c. Finally, was there something you liked or disliked about the Vietnamese and/or Norwegian gender values?

Appendix 3: Consent Form And NSD Acceptance Letter

Participation in research project

"Gender Perceptions in the Vietnamese Immigrant Community"

The impact of acculturation into Norwegian society on first and second generation Vietnamese women

1. Purpose of the study:

This project is part of a Master thesis of the Master of Philosophy program, Global Development – Theory and Practice, in the Department of Health Promotion and Development, with the Faculty of Psychology at the University of Bergen (Norway). The purpose is to understand the intergenerational and cultural transmission of gender norms and identities between first and second generation of immigrant Vietnamese women. The informants of the project are chosen through the 'snowball' method of sampling. You are kindly asked to participate due to your ties to the Vietnamese community and the fact that you meet the requirements of the research project.

2. What does participation in the research project entail?

As the research project is of a qualitative nature and based on interview data, the participants of the study will be my main source of data. These data will be collected by the interviewer through in-depth interviews. There is the possibility of a Focus Group discussion for the first-generation Vietnamese women in the case that there seems to be a major language barrier. If you accept, the entirety of the interview will be recorded and transcribed in order to better systemize and analyze the data as the research project develops. Each interview is estimated to take approximately 45 minutes to an hour. The questions are mainly concerned with your perception of gender norms and identities due to your Vietnamese heritage, your migration and resettlement in Norway. The focus will be on how women are perceived in both cultures and how you, the participant, view the gender norms and identities. The project hopes to understand if conflict exists between the first and second generations gender perception of womanhood and how traditional Vietnamese gender ideals are transmitted to the second generation. There is also a portion that will ask about the reasons why you migrated and when.

How will the information you share be treated?

All sensitive, personal information is *strictly* confidential. This means that I, the researcher, and if needed, a research translator, will be the only ones who can access this information.

Traceable information (name, e-mail address etc.) will be saved on a separate data unit and secured by username and password. The published version of the research will utilize information you have shared, but refer to you with a pseudonym. This is done to maintain your anonymity. When the project is completed (May 2018), the recording (if approved in the first place) will be deleted. The transcript of the interview will be saved for later research projects but does not include any names or other traceable, sensitive information.

Voluntary participation

Participating in the research project is *voluntary*. You can withdraw from the interview at any time without the requirement of stating a valid reason. If you do withdraw, the information already shared will be deleted upon request.

The research project has been submitted to the Data Protection Official for Research, Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD). To read more about data confidentiality, visit: http://www.nsd.uib.no/nsd/english/

It is common to have informants sign the form; but consent can also be given orally

Signature Signature

Study participant Researcher

Questions

If you have any questions regarding the research project or your role as a participant, please contact:

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Vår dato: 18.08.2017 Vår ref: 55055 / 3 / AH Deres dato: Deres ref:

Tilbakemelding på melding om behandling av personopplysninger

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 06.07.2017.
Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

55055	*Gender Perceptions in the Vietnamese Immigrant Community - The impact of acculturation into Norwegian society on first and second generation Vietnamese women*
Behandlingsansvarlig	*Universitetet i Bergen, ved institusjonens øverste leder*
Daglig ansvarlig	*Haldis Haukanes*
Student	*Gai Le*

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet, og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger vil være regulert av § 7-27 i personopplysningsforskriften. Personvernombudet tilrår at prosjektet gjennomføres.

Personvernombudets tilråding forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, ombudets kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven og helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.

Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema. Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en offentlig database.

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 31.05.2018, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Dersom noe er uklart ta gjerne kontakt over telefon.

Vennlig hilsen

Dokumentet er elektronisk produsert og godkjent ved NSDs rutiner for elektronisk godkjenning.

Marianne Høgetveit Myhren

Åsne Halskau

Kontaktperson: Åsne Halskau tlf: 55 58 21 88 / asne.halskau@nsd.no
Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering
Kopi: Gai Le, gai.t.le.05@gmail.com

Personvernombudet for forskning

Prosjektvurdering - Kommentar

Prosjektnr: 55055

The purpose of the project is to understand how the acculturation process has impacted the intergenerational and cultural transmission of gender norms and identities between first and second generation immigrant Vietnamese women.

According to the notification form the participants will be recruited by the student using the snowball approach and/or tutor/masterstudents own network. We recommend that persons already participating in the project will recruit new members by forwarding the students enquiry and ask interested persons to get in contact with the student, or that the person in question gives his/hers permission to forward their contact information to the student. Please also note that when recruiting among your own connections, you should take extra care in attending to the aspect of voluntary consent in your request for participation.

The Data Protection Official presupposes that the recruitment process is done in a way that fulfils the requirement of voluntarily participation and confidentiality.

The sample will receive written and oral information about the project, and give their consent to participate. The letter of information is well formulated.

There will be registered sensitive information relating to ethnic origin or political/philosophical/religious beliefs. Third persons will recieve oral information about the project.

The Data Protection Official presupposes that the researcher follows internal routines of the Universitetet i Bergen regarding data security. If personal data is to be stored on a private computer/portable storage devices, the information should be adequately encrypted.

The project might use an interpreter, and if so the interpreter is considered data processor for the project. The Universitetet i Bergen should then make a data processing agreement with the interpreter, cf. Personal Data Act § 15. For advice on what the data processor agreement should contain, please see: http://www.datatilsynet.no/English/Publications/Data-processor-agreements/.

Estimated end date of the project is 31.05.2018. According to the notification form all collected data will be made anonymous by this date.
Making the data anonymous entails processing it in such a way that no individuals can be recognised. This is done by:
- deleting all direct personal data (such as names/lists of reference numbers)
- deleting/rewriting indirectly identifiable data (i.e. an identifying combination of background variables, such as residence/work place, age and gender)

- deleting digital audio and video files

Please note the data processor also must delete all personal information connected to the project, including any logs and links between IP/email addresses and answers.