**To Be A Housewife Is Not Exactly A “Free Choice”**

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Good afternoon, everyone! Today I’m going to talk about housewife, that if it is a free choice or coercion.

Twentysomething like you and I have already started planning our future lives after graduation. However, let’s see a report first. We can see a number of women are bearing unfair treatment in workplace, because women are considered to spend more time taking care of families and lack ambition in career. Some people believe that women staying at home just because they are natural housewives, However, these housewives may be coerced by traditional views.

Generally, two important factors contribute to the balance of a family. The first is productivity, which means who earns more money. Second, personal preference, the real idea that you want to stay at home or go out making money. Following this logic, if a couple make decisions after thinking over the two factors above, we can assume they make free choices.

Firstly, let’s see the factor, productivity. According to the conventions, males perform better in career and earn more money, so they have higher productivity in a family. Thus, men are more suitable to go to work. However, the opinion that men perform better than women comes from ancient Agricultural Society, when physical strength was the only criteria of productivity. Women were left at home due to poorer strength while men go out hunting and serve as good labor force. But things are different today. In today’s job market, labor force does not only mean strength in most cases, but also wisdom and professional skills. There is no evidence showing that women have poorer intelligence than men. So, the opinion that males are more skilled in workplace is clearly untenable.

Second, talking about personal preference, people generally believe women love taking care of babies more. The word “mother” nearly equals to love, care and warmth. Consequently, to maximize the happiness of each person, in other words, to maximize the utility, mother stays at home and father goes out. But I doubt if women really love taking care of babies or they are brainwashed to think so. Maybe they are made to be housewives and just get better skills through practice. People like to do something largely depends on their skill in it, which determines if doing it will bring them the sense of achievement. In fact, to be a parent needs practice. Women learn to be a satisfying mother through practice, but father seldom tries. Actually, qualities that parenting requires, like patience and kindness, are not personalities that can only be obtained by women. Following this logic, the choice of housewives is to some extent coerced by conventions.

I admit that there are women who really enjoy being housewives, just like men who prefer to be a gentle daddy than a success in career. But it is also undeniable that there are women coerced to stay at home by the long-term conventions in the society. Actually, it is hard to give specific data that how many housewives made free choice and how many do not, because maybe the housewife cannot recognize the coercion herself. But, prejudice and coercion for women does exist. What we need to do is to uncover the truth step by step and make efforts to the real freedom and equality.

Thank you.