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Research  
Conference  
2019

# A 'Woman's' work is never done! (By a man)

## Gender Inequalities in Children's Housework Time in the Irish Context

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# Gender inequality

## Public sphere

- Some improvement - economic, political, occupational
- Wage gap, labour force participation, higher education, and holding positions of power (Major & Germano, 2006)

## Private sphere

- Little to no progress (worldwide: Major & Germano, 2006; Bianchi et al, 2000, Ireland: Leonard, 2004, McGinnity & Russell, 2008; Russell, Grotti, McGinnity, & Privalko, 2019)
- Research on domestic labour consistently shows that women do more than men (Kroska, 2004)
- Women spend double the time on housework than men (Davis & Greenstein, 2004; Ruppner, 2016)
- Traditionally female tasks are more time intensive and women still do the bulk of these (Ruppner, 2016)
- **Irish context**
- Women 20 hours per week
- Men 9.2 hours per week (Russell, Grotti, McGinnity, & Privalko, 2019)

# Private and public contexts linked

- Invisible work
- Inhibits career progression, professional advancement (Lachance-Grzela & Bouchard, 2010)
- Power dynamics within domestic setting as well as at a macro level (unequal housework divisions “produce and reproduce the dominant and subordinate statuses of the sex categories” West & Zimmerman, 1987, p. 144)
- Psychological well being (Claffey & Michelson, 2009), relationship satisfaction (Coltrane, 2000), marital discord (Frisco & Williams, 2003), unequal leisure time (Milkie, Raley, & Bianchi 2009)
- Equal domestic labour participation – lower likelihood of divorce, better marriage quality (Frisco & Williams, 2003)

# Childhood

- Gender inclinations and behaviours that develop in childhood are said to persevere into adulthood (Lundberg, 2005)
- Gendered differences in activities (e.g. housework) can be seen at an earlier age than cognitions and personal qualities (McHale, Crouter, & Tucker, 1999)
- Children may learn gendered patterns regarding normative housework divisions that they replicate in adulthood (Sani, 2016)

# Housework in childhood

Most research focuses on adults (Sani, 2016)

- Practical advantages and disadvantages just as they do for adults (McHale, Bartko, Crouter, & Perry-Jenkins, 1990; Penha-Lopes, 2006)
- Learn task competency; Self discipline; Responsibility; Ability to be independent; Positive parental relationships (McHale, Bartko, Crouter, & Perry-Jenkins, 1990; Penha-Lopes, 2006)

But not doing housework:

- More time to peruse skills/activities which expand “their human capital through school homework, school time, socializing activities, sports etc” (Bonke, 2010, p. 4)
- Early socialisation into gendered ‘obligations’ – learning to see it as women’s responsibilities (Leonard, 2004), learn to see this as appropriate, fair

# Irish context

- No previous study (to my knowledge) has considered children in the Irish context
- Leonard (2004) Teenage girls – 84% said parent’s housework divisions unfair, traditional patterns lessening, expected more equal share of domestic labour. Regardless of these opinions, they were already contributing more to domestic labour than their male counterparts.
- Historically, labour in Ireland was strictly divided into **traditional roles of male breadwinner and female ‘housewife,’** until 1973 women were legally obliged to leave civil-service positions (with the exception of teachers) when they married.

# The Irish Context

- **Dual-earner couples has been increasing** although the **proportion is much lower than other EU countries** with less than 50% of Irish mothers in full time employment (McGinnity & Russell, 2008)
- Gender gap in unpaid work time particularly high in Ireland compared to other EU countries (Russell, Grotti, McGinnity, & Privalko, 2019)

# Policy barriers

- Irish state policies reflect a gender ideology that supports traditional divisions between the sexes (McGinnity & Russell, 2008; Russell, Grotti, McGinnity, & Privalko, 2019)
- **Childcare costs** relative to income are high in comparison to other European countries.
- **Childcare funding** is a lower standard and is not readily available. Health and welfare policy is based on the **assumption that households have an unpaid female** who cares for children and dependent relatives, like aging parents
- **Inflexible 'working hours legislation'** may inhibit individuals from combining work and family care responsibilities
- Inhibit gender equality in the public and private spheres



# Children's housework divisions

- Scarce but reports 5 consistent findings:
  1. Children in general do little housework (Bonke, 2010);
  2. Housework time for all children increases with age (Gager, Cooney & Call, 1999);
  3. Girls do more household work than boys (Hu, 2015);
  4. Tasks conducted tend to be gender-matched, with girls doing more typically feminine chores and *vice versa* (girls wash dishes, boys put out the bins) (Gager, Cooney & Call, 1999);
  5. Housework becomes more gendered with age (Sani, 2016).

## *a priori* hypotheses

1. Older children will spend more time overall doing housework than younger children (H1)
2. Female children will spend more time overall doing housework than male children (H2)
3. Females will conduct more typically feminine chores and men will conduct typically masculine chores (H3)
4. The gender gap in overall time spent doing housework will increase with age. (H4)

# Growing up in Ireland data

- Nationally representative longitudinal data funded by the department of children and youth affairs
- Aim – understand children’s development by gathering information on factors relating to their development
- Multi informant approach (children, caregivers, principals and teachers)
- Same children participated at age 9 and 13 (as well as 17 and 20 but time use data not yet available)
- N = 8568
- Two stage clustered sample design

## Time use data

- One day time use diary.
- 24 hour day into 15 minute time slots.
- 24 available activities (one of which was “housework”)
- A variable was created counting the number of 15 minute slots spent doing housework during the diary day.
- Day of the week, whether it was a weekend or weekday, and whether it was during the school term.

## Questionnaire data

“Do you do any of these chores at home?”

(Cooking, washing dishes, hoovering, cleaning the car, putting out the bins, gardening, helping with relatives, helping with younger siblings)

Wave one	Wave two
Never	Never
Occasionally	Less often
Often	Every day 4-5 times a week 2-3 times a week

## Time use data

- **Independent variables**
- Gender (Boys N = 3831, girls N = 4135)
- Time (wave one age 9/wave two age 13)

### **Dependent variable**

- Time spent doing housework measured by time use diary
- Children who participated in both waves

## Questionnaire data

- **Independent variable**
- Time spent doing housework measured by questionnaire

### **Outcome variable**

- Gender

# Covariates (used in most other similar studies)

- Mother's education level
- Father's education level
- Mother's employment hours
- Income level
- Number of siblings
- Number of siblings under 7
- Cunningham, 2011; Evertson, 2006; Romano, 2016; Sani, 2016; Bonke, 2010.

Note: Gender ideology was not measured in GUI data therefore could not be included

# Time use versus questionnaire



- Men over report housework time (Kamo, 2000)
- Women report accurately or underreport (Kamo, 2000; Bonke, 2005)
- Time use diaries **ignore the significance of most activity**
- Michelson & Ziegler - Compare time use reports with direct behaviour – diary reports accurate
- Comparisons – time use **more precise, valid and reliable data** (Lachance-Grzela & Bouchard, 2010)
- Spurious impression of interpersonal variability
- Time use susceptible to underestimation (Gershuny, 2015) - Kroska (2004) cautions against measuring housework with time-use diaries using **only one category** (i.e housework)
- Retrospective –results in uncertainty (Bonke, 2005)
- More accurate housework time representations can be achieved through detailed questions about **specific types of chores** (Kroska, 2004)

- “A moment of awe in religion or ecstasy in love or orgasm in intercourse, a decisive blow to an enemy . . . Is treated as equal to a moment of riding on the bus, shovelling coal, or eating beans”
- De Grazia 1964



# Preliminary analyses

- Outliers -cut-off value of 3 hours 45 minutes of housework a day, deleted (N = 32)
- Relatively arbitrary, only one or two participants recorded values for each individual 15-minute increment above 3 hours 45 minutes
- It was assumed that, because most young people only conduct on average one hour of housework per week (Bonke 2010), and because so few young people recorded these values, that they were likely to be entry issues

# Preliminary analyses

- Seasonal effects, diary day effects may be problematic (Gershuny, 2015)
- No significant differences between **weekend versus weekday** at wave one or two or **term time versus holidays** wave one or two

$X^2(1, N = 5494) = 2.63, p > .05$ ;  $X^2(1, N = 4339) = .32, p > .05$ ;  $X^2(1, N = 5494) = 5.91, p > .05$ ;  $X^2(1, N = 4339) = 4.73, p > .05$ .

Female	51.6%
Urban; Rural	44.8%; 54.9%
Nuclear families	88.8%
Biological mother	98% ranged in age from 26 to 50 (M =39.91, SE =5.32)
Biological father	85% ranged in age from 19 to 50 (M =42.05, SE =5.18)
Mothers worked over 15 hours per week	46%
1 or 2 siblings, 3 or 4, only children	64%; 24%; 12%

## Time use

- A 2x2 mixed factorial ANOVA
- Between subjects variable: Gender (2 levels: male v female)
- Within subjects variable: Time (2 levels: age nine, age thirteen)
- Dependent variable: Time spent doing housework
- Independent t-tests were used to probe any interaction effects found
- Similar analyses methods used by Gager, Cooney, & Call, 1999; Benin & Edwards, 2017

## Questionnaire

- Binary logistic regressions were ran separately for children at age nine and age thirteen
- Predictor: Housework type (Cooking, washing dishes, hoovering, cleaning the car, putting out the bins, gardening, helping with relatives, helping with younger siblings)
- Outcome: Gender (male, female)
- Similar analyses methods used by Sani, 2016, Evertsson, 2006

# Results of questionnaire data

- The model significantly predicted gender,  $\chi^2 (30) = 742.01, p < .05$
- The Cox and Snell value was .10 and the Nagelkerke was .13 (indicating that the model explained between 10 and 13% of the variance)
- **63%** of cases were accurately classified on the basis of the model at age 9
- **Those who did female tasks occasionally or often were significantly more likely to be females and those who occasionally or often did male tasks were significantly more likely to be male**
- The model significantly predicted gender,  $\chi^2 (29) = 1395.51, p < .05$
- The Cox and Snell value was .20 and the Nagelkerke was .27 (indicating that the model explained between 20 and 27% of the variance)
- **70%** of cases were accurately classified on the basis of the model at age 13

# Gender as outcome

- If we know what activities a child is participating in, is that enough information to correctly classify participants as girls or boys? In other words, how informative of gender are “fingerprints” of domestic labour activities.
- “It doesn't lead to logical contradictions as long as you don't cling to the concept of independent variables as causes”
- Simmon, 2017
- An independent variable can be a good predictor of a dependent variable – it doesn't mean it caused the dependent variable.

# Wave 1 (age 9)

## Typically female tasks

Variable	B (SE)	Exp (B) Odds
Helping with cooking (Occasionally)	.664 (.061)	1.943
Helping with cooking (Often)	1.150 .079	3.157
Hoovering/cleaning (Occasionally)	.177 (.076)	1.193
Hoovering/cleaning (Often)	.472 (.087)	1.602
Washing dishes/emptying the dishwasher (Occasionally)	.593 (.066)	1.810
Washing dishes/emptying the dishwasher (Often)	.791 (.073)	2.206
Helping with younger brothers and sisters (Often)	.332 (.076)	1.394

## Typically male tasks

Variable	B (SE)	Exp (B) Odds
Helping in the garden (Occasionally)	-.051 (.059)	.951
Helping in the garden (Often)	-.368 (.076)	.692
Putting out the bin/recycling (Occasionally)	-.569 (.059)	.566
Putting out the bin/recycling (Often)	-.788 (.068)	.455
Cleaning the car (Occasionally)	-.210 (.056)	.810
Cleaning the car (Often)	-.553 (.078)	.575

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# Wave 2 (age 13)

## Typically female tasks

## Typically male tasks

Variable	B (SE)	Exp (B) Odds
Helping with cooking (Occasionally)	.995	2.704
Helping with cooking (Often)	1.906	6.724
Hoovering/cleaning (Occasionally)	.505	1.656
Hoovering/cleaning (Often)	.656	1.927
Washing dishes/emptying the dishwasher (Occasionally)	.540	1.715
Washing dishes/emptying the dishwasher (Often)	.860	2.362
Helping with younger brothers and sisters (Often)	.246	1.280
Helping an elderly or sick relative in the family	.248	1.282

Variable	B (SE)	Exp (B) Odds
Helping in the garden (Occasionally)	-.555	.574
Helping in the garden (Often)	-1.586	.205
Putting out the bin/recycling (Occasionally)	-.844	.430
Putting out the bin/recycling (Often)	-1.525	.218
Cleaning the car (Occasionally)	-.334	.716
Cleaning the car (Often)	-.343	.710



# Wave 2 (age 13)

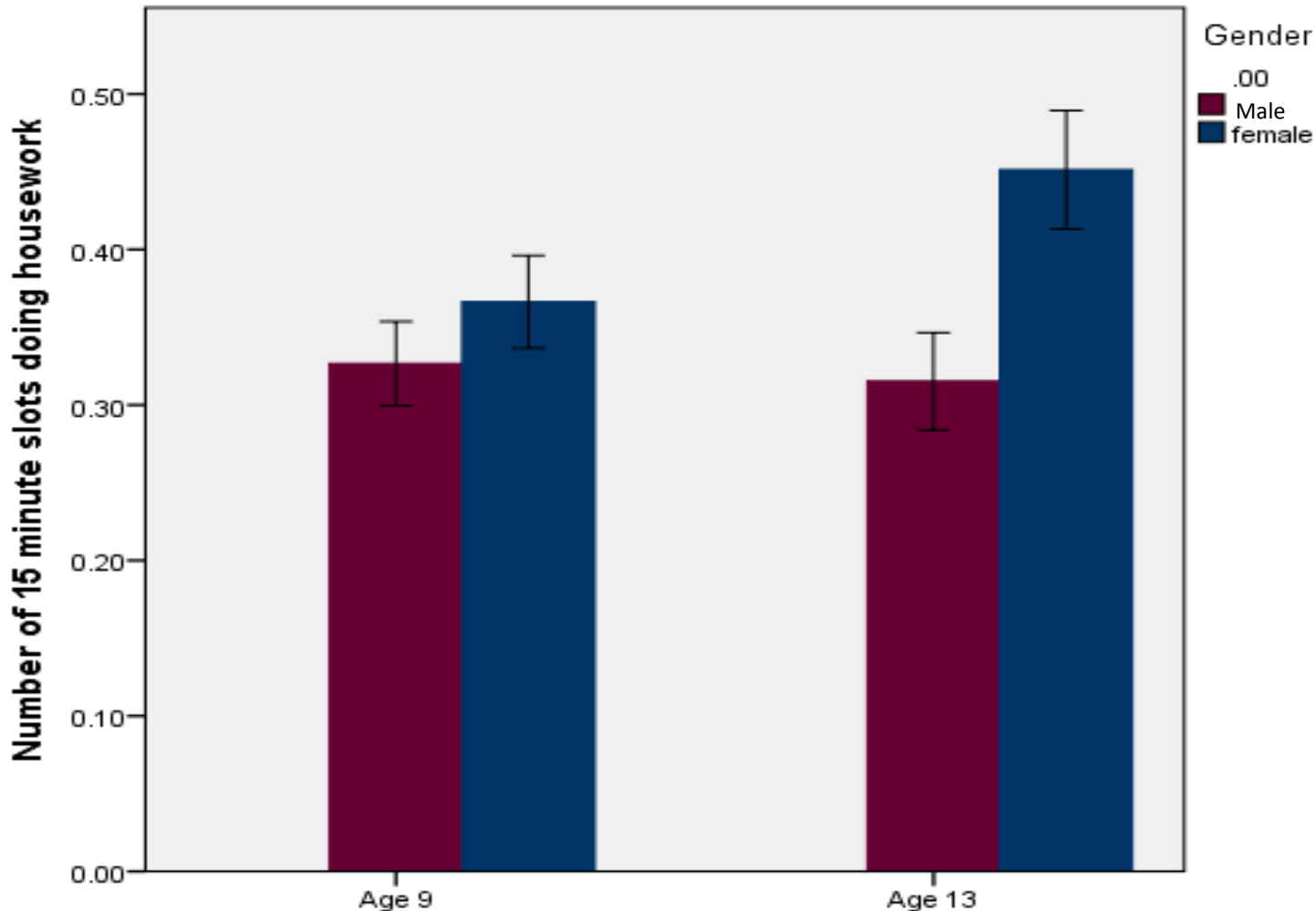
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# Number of 15 minute slots doing housework by wave (age 9, age 13)



Error Bars: 95% CI

# Results of time use data

- Significant main effect of gender  $F(1, 3181) = 16.96, p < .05$ .
- Significant interaction effect  $(F(1, 3181) = 4.5, p < .05)$
- No main effect of time (wave)
- Age nine and age 13 girls are spending significantly more time on housework than boys ( $p < .05$ ) The gendered time gap increases from age nine to age 13 with males doing less housework at age 13 than they did at age nine and females doing more housework at age 13 than they did at age nine

# Zero inflation

- Tobit regression often used to combat zero inflation problems
- BUT University of Oxford's guide to time use data:  
“Tobit models assume that large numbers of 0 cases appear because of censorship of reporting imposed by the survey design, but in general, the 0s represent real behaviour” (Fisher, Gershuny, Altintas & Gauthier, 2012, p.96)

Children typically do 2 hours of housework across a week (Bonke, 2010)

Diary only captures one day

Zero's in this study are likely to represent REAL behaviour

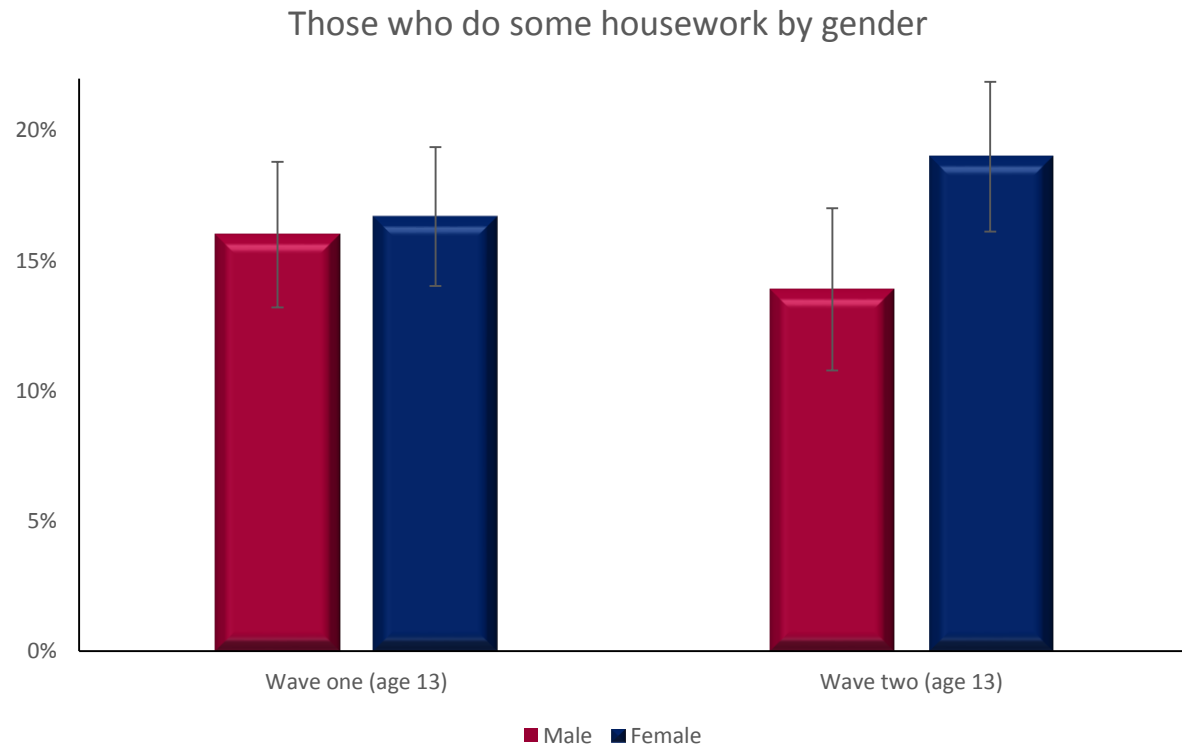
Conclusion: Tobit regression is inappropriate

# Solution

- Dichotomisation may be applied without substantial negative consequences if count variable is highly skewed (e.g. zero inflated data) (McCallum, Zhang, Preacher & Rucker, 2002)
- Dichotomisation “may be beneficial for analysis”
- Therefore, time spent doing housework was dichotomised to 0 (representing those who did no housework) and 1 (representing those who did some housework)

# Results of dichotomised data

- At age 9 there was no difference between boys and girls but by age 13 more girls did some housework. The odds of a child doing some housework at age 13 were **1.5** times higher if they were a girl.
- $\chi^2 (1) = 31.61, p < .05$



## *a priori* hypotheses

1. Older children will spend more time overall doing housework than younger children (H1)
2. Female children will spend more time overall doing housework than male children (H2)
3. Females will conduct more typically feminine chores and men will conduct typically masculine chores (H3)
4. The gender gap in overall time spent doing housework will increase with age. (H4)

# Conclusions

- Irish children are transitioning to adulthood in a society that is perpetuating gendered housework traditions
- There has already been a call for social and employment policy change to encourage greater male participation in unpaid work (Russell, Grotti, McGinnity, & Privalko, 2019)
- Important, when developing such policies, to acknowledge that inequalities are beginning in childhood
- Theoretical implications (if time)



# Discussion

- If housework is gendered by age 9 what does this say about some of the most commonly discussed theories (5) regarding unequal domestic labour divisions in adulthood (cohabiting heterosexual couples)?
- **Time availability** (housework contribution increases as both time available to do such housework and housework demands increase)

# Discussion

- **Relative resources** (power resulting from resources such as education, earnings, or occupational prestige gives partners leverage to negotiate domestic labour divisions within the household, with partners with less education and/or earning potential being allocated more domestic labour. Societal inequalities, such as gendered wage gaps between males and females of equal productivity therefore result in females doing more housework)
- **Gender Ideology** (ideologies in relation to gender and gender roles determine how housework is divided, those with traditional gender ideologies are expected to share housework more unequally than those with liberal gender ideologies)

# Discussion

- **Doing gender** (Gender is a social, cultural, and psychological construction produced by “social doings” and doing housework may be a fundamental way of producing ones gender identity – of being masculine or feminine)
- **Macro-level perspective** (the social context is important – economic, cultural, and political contexts impact domestic labour divisions. Countries that promote or value traditional gender roles within the political context are particularly unlikely to equally share household tasks, countries that actively promote equality tend to share housework more equally)

# Thanks

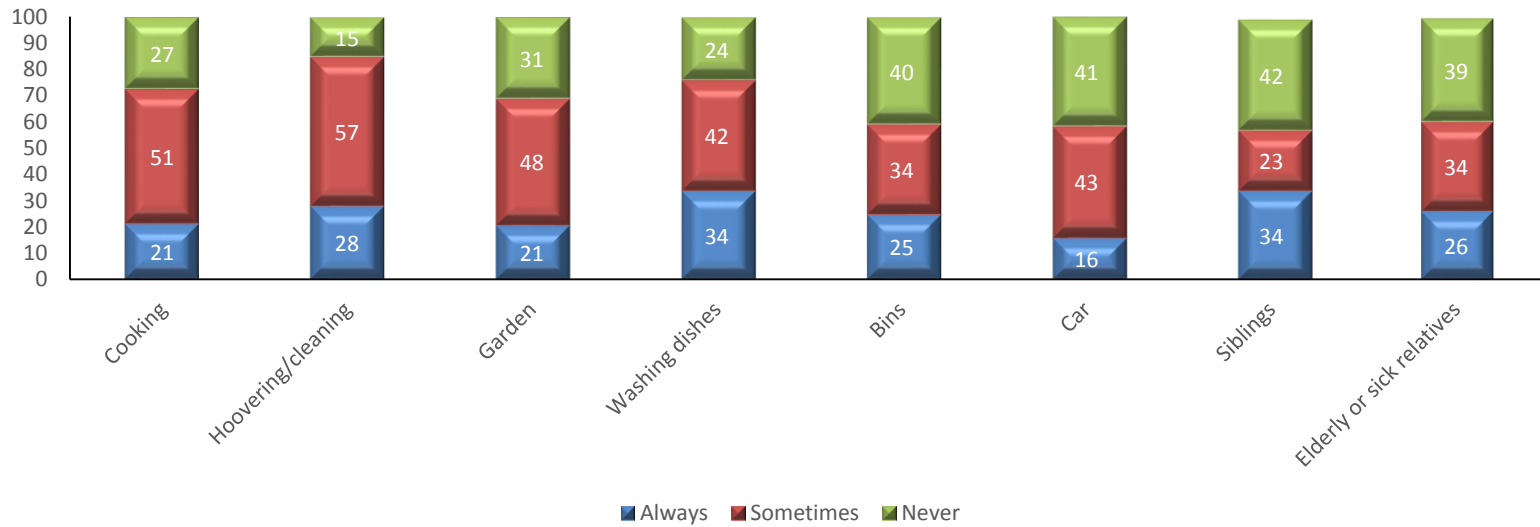
- Thanks to all who made the study possible, especially the participants who gave their free time

# Supplementary slides

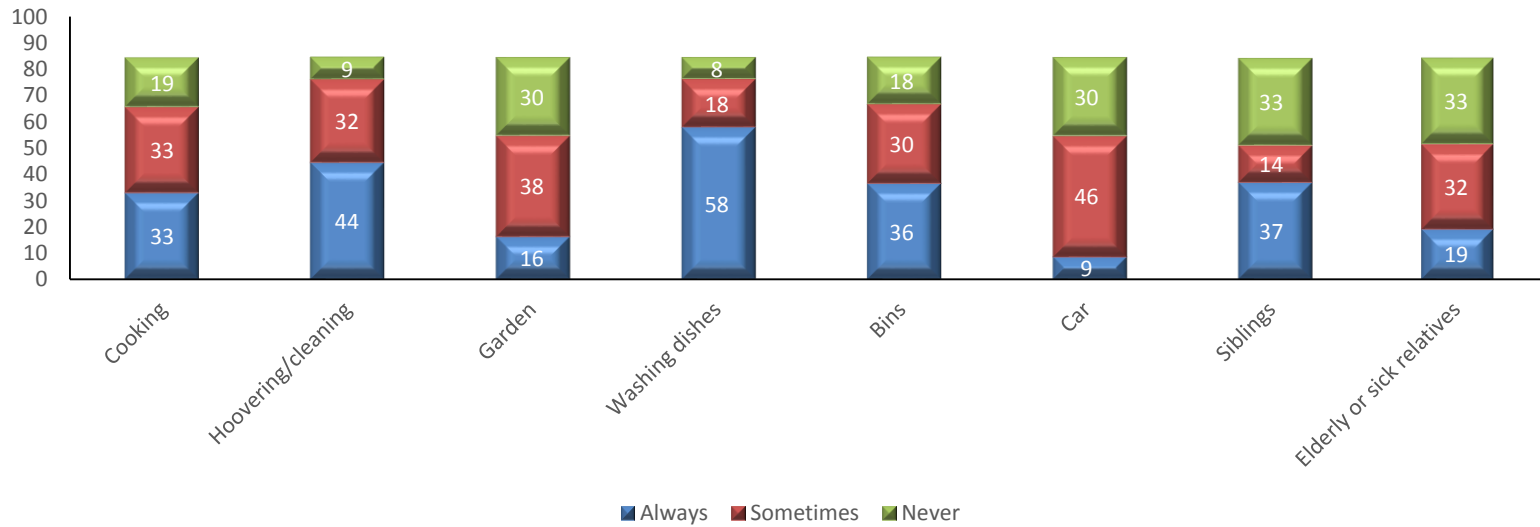
Education level	% Mother	% Father
No education or primary school	6.2	5.1
Lower secondary school	23.3	20.8
Higher secondary school	36.9	22.4
Non degree	16.3	11.8
Primary degree	11.2	9.4
Postgrad	6.1	7.3

	% Wave one	% Wave two
In school term	59.5	49.6
Out of school term	10	5.4
Weekday	53.9	40.6
Weekend	15.7	14.4

### Wave 1



### Wave 2





# Article 41.2

- In particular, the State recognises that by her life within the home, woman gives to the State a support without which the common good cannot be achieved.
- The State shall, therefore, endeavour to ensure that mothers shall not be obliged by economic necessity to engage in labour to the neglect of their duties in the home.