

The Paradox of Reality: you can be whatever you want within reason, an exploration of the relationship between gendered childhood activities and material culture to children's future aspirations.



NUI MAYNOOTH

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to explore the relationship between gender, material culture and activities children engage with throughout childhood in the Irish context and trace how these socialisation experiences impact their occupational aspirations. I utilised two major sociological theoretical perspectives in order to illustrate my argument, that of Corsaro's interpretive reproduction and the feminist/gender performativity perspectives of Butler, Zimmerman, Connell and Goffman. Using the Growing Up in Ireland longitudinal study, I utilised the variables, school, hobbies, activities and occupational aspirations to research my question and show how the micro socialisation processes engaged with by children both in school and at home contribute to a macro level understandings of "appropriate" gender occupational aspirations and roles. This research found that gendered scripts and norms are continuously perpetuated through the education and socialisation processes children experience through everyday activities from the books they read to the preferred way they choose to spend their free time, as they learn and internalise these norms through play. It also found that the occupational aspirations of the children were impacted as a result of gender performativity expectations constructed by society. A significant issue that emerges from this research is that the participation of children in gender specific activities continue to lead to the subordination of women, reducing them to matters of the domestic and private sphere and convincing young girls that caring roles are natural for women to want to aspire to. It also shows how the narrative of essential gendered characteristics lead to inequalities that persist in terms of the sex segregated labour force feminising occupations such as teachers and nurses whilst masculinising STEM occupations. The findings of this study are important as it shines a light on the discrete domains where children internalise and appropriate harmful gender norms within the Irish context, this will help policy makers recognise and address how they can work to create a less gender segregated society by starting to reinvent the way children understand gender.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Experiences in childhood are continuously shaped by social, cultural, economic and political forces. A key example of this in contemporary society is the shaping of children's understanding of gender, through institutions such as the state, education system, digital society and also through symbolic and material culture consumed on a daily basis through mass media and advertisement (Corsaro 2015). It has been observed that experiences in childhood such as extra-curricular activities to playing with certain toys, can affect the way a child develops an understanding of their role/position in society. By looking at gendered aspects of material culture and childhood activities, patterns emerge in relation to how these aspects of childhood "shape expectations of possible future aspirations" (Askew 2014:2). As Zimmerman argued, "gender is simply a product of social doings", this rings true in relation to how the activities of childhood teach children how to perform specific gender roles, which ultimately reproduce occupational inequalities and the disproportionate numbers of women in caring roles and jobs (Zimmerman 1987:126). This study aims to contribute to the current shift in dominant discourse in relation to the occupational capabilities of women in society and to highlight how society needs to continue to accept new ideals and new possible futures for the lives of young girls and women. This also aims to highlight how these alternative realities can only be realised by young girls by the reimagining of gendered material culture and activities in childhood. In order to explore these ideas, the main research question at hand asks, "Does the gendering of activities and material culture during childhood influence/ correspond with young girl's future aspirations in relation to occupation and motherhood?". This small specialised investigation of this societal pattern in the Irish context shines a light and opens up a conversation about the larger phenomenon of occupational inequalities and how it stems from childhood as both young boys and girls are in "constant battle between hopes dreams and expectations vs realistic outlook and achievement", due to stereotypical gendered images fed to them by multiple platforms on a daily basis (Cejka 1999:415). The

often-limiting toxic social norms of female femininity and heteronormativity projected onto the youth, that populate media and advertisement images require challenging in order to spread equality of power and eradicate “negative social conditioning” and blind acceptance of unequal power relations (O’Donohoe 2014). The rationale for carrying out this research is to address the gap in the Irish literature that focuses on children’s experience of gendered activities and occupational aspirations, as most of this research and indeed the research of the wider world focuses on the relationship between social class and occupational aspirations and the impact of parents/teachers on children’s aspirations, no literature solely focuses on the voice of children and their experiences of how play and hobbies contribute to their understandings of their appropriate place in society. This research also contributes to the literature as it is a focused study on a particular age range of children known as the pre-teen stage, as a large amount of literature on this topic focuses on adolescents and preschool children, the theoretical framework utilised, Corsaro’s interpretive reproduction and Butler’s gender performativity, has not been used in unison to explain this societal trend in the Irish context. The specific research questions that I intend to explore in relation to the variables of the GUI data set are: Is there a relationship between gender and: Whether children enjoy school?/ Whether children enjoy Maths?/ Whether children enjoy reading?/ What children prefer to do in their free time?/ What types of books children read novels vs factual books?/ The kinds of chores children engage with in the home cooking or taking out the bins?/ The occupational aspirations of these children? This research is of particular relevance in relation to the Irish context due to the fact that although more women are now participating in the labour market there is still major inequalities that exist in relation to the gender segregation of caring/teaching occupations and high level, managerial/ STEM occupations, in order to address this society must locate where these inequalities stem from and how they can be addressed by policy makers, institutions and indeed wider society as a whole.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Intro

The sociological field of the study of childhood and gender contains a wide array of rich sociological concepts, theoretical frameworks and worldwide studies from places like Australia to Austria. From Butler's gender performativity to Corsaro's interpretive reproduction, these multiple viewpoints add and enhance to a rich discussion and investigation into the gendered activities of children and how they correspond to life aspirations which will work to guide this research project. This literature review will firstly discuss the previous studies undergone on this topic. This essay will then discuss the socialization process of children in relation to Corsaro's interpretive reproduction, Lareau's concerted Cultivation and previous research that has explored this topic through these lenses, this literature review will then go onto discuss the studies of Zimmerman, Butler and Goffman in relation to gender performativity and learning through interaction and highlight the previous research undergone that expands these arguments, this review will finally discuss the idea of hegemonic masculinity and how this works to oppress women in relation to Connell, Foucault's biopolitics and Marxist key thinkers and outline previous research that corresponds to these theoretical arguments.

Previous Studies

Previous studies such as the works of Ganssen and Halper have tended to focus solely on the perspectives of parents and other figure heads in children's lives and how these people contribute to the promotion of gender roles and scripts that children increasingly act out in terms of how they play, the activities they choose to participate in and also what they aspire to be. Research conducted by Byrne, Askew and Heron, focuses on how class and children's socio-economic backgrounds influence their occupational aspirations whilst Griffin and Fulcher analyse the experiences of older children such as adolescents and even university students and younger preschool children, there is not a rich body of research that focuses on

the childhood life stage of pre-teens. Much of this literature highlights through different examples and theoretical lenses how gendered experiences ranging from the movies children watch to the way they are disciplined, impact what children view as their potential and appropriate roles and occupational aspirations should be within their societies.

Theoretical Framework

Interpretive Reproduction

When looking at the socialization process of children and how they learn, internalise and interpret gender roles the key sociological thinkers that emerge are Corsaro with his theoretical framework of interpretive reproduction (2015) and Annette Lareau in relation to concerted cultivation, both theorists relate in the way they choose to highlight how class background is also tied into the parental transmission of traditional gender beliefs, this also raises connections with Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital and habitus (Corsaro 2015). Their findings demonstrate that the parents who attain lower social and cultural capital are more likely to believe in traditionalist gender norms which they perpetuate onto their children (McCoy 2012). Both theorists approach the idea of gendered material culture and gendered aspirations in terms of socio-cultural aspects. As parents are the primary source of socialization in childhood, the class background, educational attainment levels and occupation of parents play a significant role in the gendering of children and the activities parents choose to allow their children undertake, which ultimately work to narrow or expand their child's expectations for their future. This also evokes Bourdieu's concept of habitus, where one embodies their attained forms of cultural capital in relation to all aspects of life such as values, social interactions and beliefs. Corsaro, believes childhood is "an autonomous life stage in and of itself where children work in peer groups to reappropriate information" through play in order to process anxieties about the future whilst creating own new culture (Corsaro 2015:127). The gendered side of peer culture and interpretive reproduction can continuously be observed by children's forms of play and the toys they consume. Girls are

often seen to play more domestic roles in playtime, whilst boys more adventurous and violent imaginary play (Fulcher 2018). As children “look for options that seem most compatible and accessible within self-concepts” concerted cultivation explains how these self-concepts are understood through parents’ as the primary source of aspiration (Corsaro 2015). Parents also engage in gendered parenting, exposing children to different products and responding to children’s different behaviours differently depending on gender: “earliest non biological origins of children’s gendered behaviour in their first social experiences with parents’ ex: what colour the parents have chosen to paint their room” (Russell 2002:630). Parents engage in a socialization process and decision making regardless of child’s individual characteristics. It is also noted that the minute parents know the gender of their child they create expectations about the child’s interests’ skills and behaviours, this can be seen in the form of consistently buying stereotypical toys (Fulcher 2018). Corsaro also discusses how ideologies are constructed and how children and adults co construct through intergenerational transmission of ideas, where children learn specific values and behaviours in relation to their class background (Halpern 2016). Children also contribute their own opinions and understanding of the world by reappropriating information as ways of navigating and coping with anxieties for the future as a form of cultural reproduction. This is bound up with media and advertisement images of gender from fairy tales to movies and toys. Colour plays a significant role in children attempting to understand their place in the world as pink and sparkles are continuously shown to be what girls should like, girls grow up believing this and therefore may choose to conform or challenge this idea (Gansen 2019). This idea is also seen through the use of language if girls hear “girls are better at this”, this strikes them to act on better performance which may influence their opinions of a wanted future. Marketing is continuously cultivating different skills this is seen in the article on girl’s heaven, “a space girls affirm their femininity epitomy of commercial appropriation of girls femininity”, which

links contemporary consumer culture to the process of becoming a woman, highlighted throughout Disney storylines and princess movies a form of “organizational readiness”, where “animations constitute expectations about life of work and gendered workplace roles” (Griffin 2017). Traditional princess movies continuously present the young girl as not engaging in paid work and rescued from work by men, representing versions of gendered practices films inevitably contribute to the circulation of gendered norms. This is how Corsaro’s concepts of interpretive reproduction and Lareau’s concerted cultivation present similar views on the way in which children are gendered through the private and public spheres, which are inextricably linked to socio cultural status of the parents and media.

Gender Performativity

The topic of gendering has also been interpreted by Zimmerman and Butler who present similar ideas as they come from an interactionist standpoint, which also ties in with Goffman’s idea of gender performativity, highlighting how gender is learned and displayed repetitively through interactions with people, places and things (Zimmerman 1987). Butler and Zimmerman similarly discuss the concept of “doing gender” as a “routine accomplished in everyday interaction” (Zimmerman 1987:127). Zimmerman argues sex roles and labelling attributes are constructed on multiple levels from psychological, cultural and social. This explains the research question at hand from the viewpoint that society through its use of toys to educational methods “casts particular pursuits as inherently masculine or feminine” (Gansen 2019). Goffman sees gender as a “display”, where “everyday categorization established and sustained by socially required identificatory displays that proclaim one’s membership” to certain roles that constructs views like female doctors or male nurses as acceptations to the rule (Sheppard 2018). Goffman would look at this research question from the angle that children simply learn their place in society in relation to gender through rituals “perfunctory conventional acts”, that are socially scripted and dramatized (Goffman 1956).

Zimmerman regards sex, sex category and gender as three distinctive things, involved in the gender attribution process, “culturally approved standards of being in the world”. An example of this is organized sports an institutionalized framework for the expression of manliness (Zimmerman 1987). Becoming boys and girls is a socialization and categorization process where women are taught to be seen as “ornamental objects” (Askew 2014). A key example of research that utilises this viewpoint focused on how policewomen do gender, where they actively resist and adopt stereotypical norms of femininity, they are seen to have to choose between femininity therefore not taken seriously or professionalism therefore labelled dyke or butch (Rabe Hemp 2009). The idea that women are better suited to roles due to their unique abilities is a myth as the biological does not tie you to the social (O’Donohoe 2014). All these sociological theorists discuss concepts, where meaning is created through communications that informs personality traits, as Goffman regards, “when an individual plays a part, he implicitly requests his observers to take seriously the impression that is fostered before them” (Goffman 1956:51). This repetition of stylised acts originating from the childhood experience, limits educational and occupational aspirations as “children fail to fully recognize the full spectrum of cognitive and social capacities” (Sheppard 2018:266).

Patriarchal Capitalism

The final standpoint that this research question has been approached from is through the idea of capitalism and hegemonic masculinity, where young boys and girls are socialised by activities and toys in order to keep the symbolic order of the world intact and to keep those in power safe by the continuous perpetuation of subordinating ideas of women’s roles in society and also toxic masculinity, which continuously contributes to inequalities. This is discussed in the works of Connell, Marx, Gilman and also ties in with the ideas of Foucault’s biopolitics. All of these key thinkers are similar in the ways they discuss gender ideas as reducing women to the bare functions of care givers and a source of the reproduction of the

labour force, leading women to be continuously alienated from the labour force. Connell coined the term “patriarchal dividend”, a “mechanism of social control” (Connell 1997). Gilman also discusses how work is not seen as what women do but as what they are (Sheppard 2018). Connell and gender politics, for men, is constantly tied to world of work and power in society and is also discussed as a kind of masculinity one would meet on a rugby field to corporate boardrooms and most governments of the world this can be described as “corporate hegemonic masculinity” (Lopez 2020). The reality of patriarchal privileging is evident as institutions simply reflect the needs and wishes of powerful men, “all men keeping women in a state of fear” (Rabe Hemp 2009:124). Marxist perspective views power stemming from ruling groups and acting in a somewhat oppressive manner.

To conclude this essay has discussed the wide array of literature that contributes to the sociological theorising of gender in childhood and ultimately contributes to the overall understanding of the relationship between gendered material culture and childhood activities to occupational aspirations of children. From undergoing this literature review it is clear there is an interesting opportunity for a new intellectual and methodological standpoint from which to answer this research question in order to contribute to debates, in terms of the idea that society as a whole through institutions such as the education system, state and mass media continuously present a paradox between circulating the idea to young children that “you can do anything you set your mind to”, vs. the reality of the continuous filtering of harmful gender stereotypes and ideas through imagery and discourse consumed daily. Previous research also tends to focus on that of parents and teacher points of view, therefore leaving a gap to give voice and authority to the children themselves on the ways in which they experience gender socialisation in their lives. These images and ideas ultimately work to limit a child’s expectations of their possible future realities, reproducing occupational inequalities. I also feel this study will contribute to debates about gender and childhood as there is a gap

for secondary quantitative approach to this research question, as the majority of studies conducted are of a qualitative nature and utilise primary research through interviews and surveys conducted by the researcher themselves. This small-scale study of the Irish society using the GUI also allows for a significant contribution as it highlights larger patterns and trends that are worrying in modern day society.

Methodology:

Intro:

This research aims to demonstrate how the gendering of material culture and the circulation of gendered narratives around activities, sports and hobbies continue to impact children's occupational aspirations in contemporary Irish society. The idea of gender as a performance and social construct was explored through the feminist perspectives of Butler, Connell, Zimmerman and Goffman. Corsaro's theory of interpretive reproduction and Marx's idea of hegemonic capitalism was used to explore how this gender socialisation plays out and who it works to benefit. This chapter will describe the methods used and how the GUI dataset was employed to address the aims, objectives and central research questions. The following chapter will discuss this under the subheadings, research, sampling and method of data collection in relation to using the GUI dataset, a discussion of the key independent and dependant variables utilised, an explanation of the operationalisation and conceptualisation of the variables, the analytical plan, limitations of this method of research and finally the ethical considerations.

Research Design, Sampling, Method Data Collection:

This research design is a cross-sectional, quantitative study using secondary data analysis based on the Growing Up in Ireland Survey, a national, longitudinal survey that focuses on the lives of children growing up in contemporary Ireland. It is the first longitudinal study undergone in Ireland and a nationally representative survey of the childhood population. The research is funded by the government and carried out by researchers from the ESRI (Economic and Social Research Institute) and also TCD (Trinity College Dublin). The survey is managed by the Department of Children, Disability, Equality and Integration with the Central Statistics office. The aim of the original study is to shine a light on the experiences of children in Ireland and how these experiences are shaped by institutions such as healthcare,

education etc. Highlighting societal inequalities and indicating whether policy changes are required.

The data I intend to utilise in my research is related to the infant cohort'08, born between the dates of the 1st Dec. 2007- 30th June 2008. This GUI quantitative data is extremely useful and beneficial when conducting my research on the relationship between childhood activities and future aspirations, as it will allow me to trace gendered patterns in the form of statistics and percentages, for example by looking at time spent online by boys vs. girls, I can trace whether this may result in more boys or girls hoping to attain a future career that is digitally based and whether or not there is a higher percentage of males than females who aspire to conduct jobs of this nature in the future. This is a key strength of using the GUI specific to my research question as it provides clear and concise data to interpret and trace patterns in relation to boys vs. girls' aspirations.

Another strength of this form of secondary, quantitative data analysis is that it is completely reliable as it has been published on a national basis, therefore all calculations are accurate which can be less time consuming than collecting primary data. No other methods of data collection will be utilised within this research. This research will draw on questions solely answered by the children in order to obtain an understanding of their personal likes and dislikes, hobbies and aspirations and whether there is a relationship between these variables and gender. In order to interpret and analyse the data I will utilise sociological theory and theoretical perspectives. Using the GUI data is most accurate and relevant to determine trends in gender preferences in relation to children's occupational aspirations and preferred activities as this study research questions are a combination of descriptive and explanatory.

Data/Variables:

Ten different variables will be used to answer my overall research question: Gender, whether the child enjoys school, whether the child enjoys maths, whether the child enjoys reading, the

child's favourite way to spend their free time, Whether the child reads novels, whether the child reads factual books, Whether the child cooks as part of their chores, whether the child takes out the bins as part of their chores and the child's occupational aspirations. I utilised wave 5 of the infant cohort dictionary to pick the most suitable and relevant variables for my research to represent children's everyday chores, preferred school subjects' and general activities utilising a combination of ordinal and nominal variables. This took some time to identify as there was 193 variables to select from that work to capture the everyday lived experiences of this group of children living in Irish society today, allowing me to trace gender patterns of childhood activities. I ran both univariate and bivariate analysis in order to obtain descriptive and inferential statistics that would provide answers to my specific research questions. The independent variable being gender as it is presumed as the predictor of the child's preferences for activities and goals and the dependant variable being the aspirations and activities. I had to recode the two variables of free time and occupational aspirations to ensure the cell size was not less than 5, enabling a reliable chi square test.

Operationalisation/Conceptualisation:

In order to conceptualise how gender impacts the activity and occupational preferences of children I focused on aspects such as their favourite subjects to participate in in school, their favourite hobbies, the material culture that particular genders prefer, the chores young boy's vs girls participate in within the home and their occupational aspirations. In order to operationalise these concepts within using the GUI data set I scanned the data dictionary and identified the most suitable variables that would help me to distinguish whether the activities and occupational aspirations of children persist to be highly gender segregated seen below. I utilised variables answered directly by the children participating in the survey to allow a voice for their personal experiences of this form of organisational readiness and to examine whether gender performativity still pervades these aspects of children's lives.

	Conceptualisation	Operationalisation
School	Does a gendered pattern emerge in terms of subject preferences in school?	Do you enjoy school? Do you enjoy maths? Do you enjoy reading?
Hobbies	Is there a relationship between the nature of the hobby's children partake in and their gender?	What do you do in your free time?
Activities	Does the gender preference of material culture children engage with reveal gendered preferences? Do young girls participate in more private sphere, domestic tasks compared to boys? Do boys participate in more heavy lifting public sphere chores?	Do you read novels? Do you read books that explain things? Do you help with the cooking as part of your chores? Do you take out the bins as part of your chores?
Occupational Aspirations	Are the occupational aspirations of these children highly gender segregated?	What are your occupational aspirations?

Analytical Approach:

I conducted both univariate and bivariate analysis in order to analyse and draw conclusions in relation to my research. I began by downloading the GUI SPSS data file of wave 5 of the infant cohort to my computer. I then saved both a master and working file to my folder on my computer titled research project. I then worked to identify what level of measurement each of my chosen variables were. I then worked on conducting a univariate analysis of each of my variables in order to construct a table of summary statistics. In order to do this I opened my GUI working file and chose the option analyse, I chose the option analyse, then frequency and added the variables of my interest into the box provided. I then chose to analyse the mode in the statistics section and ran my univariate analysis. Then I worked towards conducting a bivariate analysis of my variables comparing my independent variables to the dependant variable gender. I chose to run crosstabulations of my variables as they were of a nominal and ordinal nature. I then selected the analyse option, then descriptive statistics and chose the crosstab option. I then placed my independent variable into the box titled column and my dependent variables into the box titled row and ensured to choose the option cells and in the percentage option columns, I then ran my bivariate analysis. I compiled a list of hypotheses and utilised the chi square tests that I ran in order to analyse whether I could accept these and reject their corresponding null hypothesis. I also worked in SPSS to produce inferential statistics to determine the strength of these associations in terms of the Phi and Cramer V values.

Limitations:

Before conducting my research there were multiple limitations and challenges, I had to consider in terms of conducting quantitative and secondary data analysis. A challenge that quantitative data analysis poses is in terms of the validity of the variables provided and utilised. I had to ensure my chosen variables could be applied to the research questions I was aiming to answer, in order to do this, I had to recode a couple of my variables so that the

response categories were relevant, such as how children choose to spend their free time and their occupational aspirations. Another challenge that emerged in terms of conducting secondary data analysis was my inability to rework or elaborate on the questions asked, there were no specific variables included in the research in relation to the activity of shopping or specific toys that the children played with so I had to compromise in incorporating other variables such as the kinds of books children preferred to read in order to compensate and answer my research questions in relation to the material culture of children.

Ethical Issues:

In order to maintain high ethical standards all interviewees and staff involved in the collection of data for the Growing Up in Ireland Survey were vetted by An Garda Síochána and closely followed the ethical guidelines set out by the Sociological Association of Ireland and relevant acts such as data and statistical protection acts. As the GUI survey involves interviewing children, considered a vulnerable group of society, certain ethical steps were taken in order to avoid exposing the participants to harm or pose any risks such as, providing parents with a list of the questions their children would be asked for their review and approval and the participants were never left alone in a room with an interviewer, there was always a witness present. The interviews were also carried out on a voluntary basis. In order to respect participants anonymity and privacy no specific identities were revealed and were instead numerically coded. In order to keep my secondary data analysis ethically sound and safe in relation to utilising information provided by the GUI, I ensured I had permission to use the data from my special topic's leader whom was given access to this information from the Irish social scientist data archive. I also ensured the data was kept safe from unauthorised access and that the time period I held onto access to this information was no longer than necessary.

Chapter 4: Findings

Intro

This chapter will cover the key findings and results of the univariate and bivariate analysis I have conducted using the GUI data of the infant cohort of '08, in order to obtain an understanding of the relationship between children's activities, occupational aspirations and how gender impacts these preferred activities and aspirations. My findings aim to highlight how there is a gendered code/ expectation in relation to activities, hobbies and occupations persisting in Ireland today and demonstrate how these norms are socially constructed throughout the childhood life stage. I will outline the relationship between gender and school, extra-curricular activities, hobbies and occupational aspirations, utilising my findings, to illustrate the significant statistical relationship between these variables.

Univariate Analysis

Discussion Dependant Variables

The aim of this univariate analysis is to outline the distribution of percentages of children's opinions on school, subjects, activities and occupational aspirations. My main research question I intend on investigating is "Does the gendering of activities and material culture during childhood influence/correspond with young girl's future aspirations in relation to occupation and motherhood?", I will focus on questions answered by the children and utilise the following variables as a means to capture an answer to this question whilst also giving voice to the children's experiences and opinions.

School

The children were asked multiple questions in relation to the context of school, the first being "What do you think about school?", it is clear from the results I have obtained in table one below that 33.3% of children said that they always liked school, 61.9% said they sometimes liked school and 4.8% said that they never liked school. Another question that poses very useful in terms of answering my overall research question is "Do you like Maths?", 48.7% said they always liked it, 41.8% said sometimes and 9.5% of children said

they never liked it, the distribution of percent leaning towards a more positive opinion in relation to enjoying this subject. The final question in relation to school that is interesting to focus on is the question: “Do you like reading”, as primary school children in Ireland conduct reading as part of the English curriculum. 61.7% of children said they always liked it, 33.9% said they sometimes liked it and 4.4% said they never liked it, again an overall positive response to the subject. A univariate analysis of these variables allows for an overall understanding and context of the opinion of the children on school and some of its main subjects.

Hobbies

The variable that gives an insight into the hobbies favoured by the children are, “Favourite thing to do in free time?”, extremely relevant to utilise in terms of my study. When looking at the variable “free time”, in order to conduct my univariate analysis, I chose to re-code and decrease the number of response categories into more specific groups in order to suit my research question and the smaller, specific research questions I intend to investigate. These categories and distributions are as follows, 29.9% of children chose Sports as their favourite way to spend their free time, 10.5% chose drama, 18.1% for internet/gaming, 23.1% for general play, 5.5% for spending time with their family, 8.7% of children said they enjoyed reading in their free time and 4.8% did not answer. The univariate analysis of this variable is of great relevance as it demonstrates what children in contemporary Ireland most enjoy participating in outside of school.

Activities

The activities such as chores and reading and understanding the specific nature of the chore’s children engage in is of particular interest in relation to my research question as allows for an investigation into the specific preferences and tasks these children engage in on a daily basis revealing aspects of their lifestyle. The first univariate analysis and variable I have chosen to investigate under this heading is “What do you like to read (stories/novels)”, 19.8% said they

did enjoy reading novels whilst 80.2% said they did not. In relation to enjoying reading “books that explain things”, 70.6% of children said they enjoy these kinds of books and 29.4% of children said they did not, revealing that more children today of this age group in Ireland enjoy fact over fiction. The variable “Do you do any of these chores or jobs at home (help with cooking for the family), is distributed with, 12.8% of children answering no, 51.5% occasionally and 35.7% answered no. When asked about chores such as taking the bins out the distribution of percent in relation to the response categories is as follows, 18% said yes, 37.4% occasionally and 44.7% said they never put the bins out.

Occupational Aspirations

When conducting my univariate analysis on the occupational aspirations of this group of children I found I needed to recode the response categories in order to suit my research questions and overall aim of my thesis, as I wanted to address the distribution of aspirations in terms of specific highly gendered professions. 7.2% of children said they had no occupational aspirations, 14.4% answered that they aspired to teaching professions, 3.5% the science sphere and 74.9% comprised of all the other occupational aspirations.

Discussion of Independent Variable

This research is intent on exploring the nature of the impact of gendered aspects of society that find their roots in childhood such as hobbies, extracurricular activities, school subject choice and how these impact a child’s occupational aspirations and expectations for their future careers and work to cast particular pursuits as either masculine or feminine which is ultimately detrimental in terms of reproducing inequalities. The independent variable I have utilised is the nominal variable of gender, as it is presumed as the predictor of the child’s preferences for activities and goals. As seen from the table of summary statistics below (table 1), the research respondents are comprised of 50.3 % males and 49.7% females, therefore there is an overall even distribution of male and female respondents to the questions asked in the Growing Up In Ireland survey, this even distribution allows for an accurate representation

of both genders, vital in being able to provide evidence for my argument and drawing conclusions for my research questions about the contrast in occupational aspirations of these children in terms of gender.

Table 1: Table of Summary Statistics

	N	%
Gender		
Male	4037	50.3
Female	3989	49.7
What do you think about school?		
Always	2636	33.3
Sometimes	4898	61.9
Never	376	4.8
Do you like maths?		
Always	3849	48.7
Sometimes	3307	41.8
Never	755	9.5
Do you like reading?		
Always	4885	61.7
Sometimes	2679	33.9
Never	347	4.4
Most Favourite thing to do in free time?		
Sports	2349	29.2
Drama	846	10.5
Internet/gaming	1452	18.1
Play	1856	23.1
Family	442	5.5
Reading	702	8.7
Unknown	385	4.8
What do you like to read? (stories or novels)		
Yes	1591	19.8
No	6441	80.2
What do you like to read? (books that explain things)		
Yes	5669	70.6
No	2363	29.4

Do you do any of these chores or jobs at home? (help with cooking for the family)		
Often	1010	12.8
Occasionally	4071	51.5
Never	2827	35.7
Do you do any of these chores or jobs at home? (Putting out the bin)		
Often	1422	18
Occasionally	2955	37.4
Never	3532	44.7
Occupational Aspirations		
No occupational aspirations	581	7.2
Teaching occupational aspirations	1156	14.4
Science occupational aspirations	281	3.5
All other occupational aspirations	6014	74.9

Bivariate Analysis

The GUI survey captures many relevant variables in relation to my study of the gendered activities and occupational aspirations of children in contemporary Ireland today. By conducting a bivariate analysis of my chosen variables, the theories and concepts of Butler, Corsaro and Marx such as gender formation and social construction come alive and demonstrate much relevance in terms of the lives of children in Ireland today. By capturing trends and relationships in terms of the questions answered by the children it offers an insight into their experiences of heteronormative expectations, a key part of this thesis in order to understand and discover how and where these gender socialisation processes originate and how they manifest throughout these children's lived experiences. By conducting my bivariate analysis, I have been able to capture the gendering of activities that evidently are still part of Irish social processes today across multiple contexts from school to everyday activities, which ultimately impacts children's understandings of what is accepted by society as a suitable aspiration for one's gender, contributing to the gendered labour force that persists in Ireland today.

Education

By conducting a bivariate analysis of my chosen variables, I wish to highlight specific areas of children's lives where they engage in activities within the socialisation process also known as "interpretive reproduction", that lead to inequalities between genders in terms of occupational aspirations. One of the main institutions involved in this process identified by liberal feminists as a site that contributes to inequalities and discrimination in terms of gender, is school. When analysing the chi-square below it is clear I can accept the hypothesis that there is a significant association between gender and whether or not the child enjoys school as the significant value is below 0.5. When looking at the Phi value the strength of the association is low/weak value of 0.178. Looking at the crosstabs below it is clear that a higher percent of females (40.8%) always like school, compared to a higher percent of males sometimes and never liking school. This is interesting as it illustrates a trend that more females always enjoy school in contemporary Ireland, compared to males, an institution once orientated towards the priorities of teaching males is now favoured by females, which alludes to the fact there is an ongoing process to eliminate patriarchal, discriminatory sex roles, which also allows an insight into whether Irelands children population is resisting or reproducing inequalities in terms of education.

Table 2: Crosstab "What do you think about school?"

		Person 2 gender Wave 5 Grid (Study Child)		Total	
		male	female		
Q1. What do you think about school?	Always like it	Count	1026	1609	2635
		% within Person 2 gender Wave 5 Grid (Study Child)	25.9%	40.8%	33.3%
	Sometimes like it	Count	2660	2234	4894
		% within Person 2 gender Wave 5 Grid (Study Child)	67.1%	56.7%	61.9%
	Never like it	Count	276	99	375
		% within Person 2 gender Wave 5 Grid (Study Child)	0.7%	0.1%	0.9%

	% within Person 2 gender Wave 5 Grid (Study Child)	7.0%	2.5%	4.7%
Total	Count	3962	3942	7904
	% within Person 2 gender Wave 5 Grid (Study Child)	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 3: Chi-Square "What do you think about School?"

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	249.566 ^a	2	.000
Likelihood Ratio	254.102	2	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	248.014	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	7904		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 187.03.

It is clear from the chi square value “asymptomatic significant” below that I can reject the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between gender and whether the child enjoys the subject of maths as the value is 0.00. When looking at the Phi value the strength of the association is weak with a value of 0.128. It is significant to my research to delve into a bivariate analysis of gender and school subjects as I want to analyse whether the likes and dislikes of subjects is still highly gender divided which in the past has led to discriminatory sex roles. It also poses useful in terms of investigating how education and activities within childhood contribute to the reproduction of gender divisions within capitalism as a gatekeeping process which has worked to link woman/ mother figure to private sphere, contributing to the sex segregated labour force. It is clear that a higher percent of male children always like maths (54.9%), compared to a higher percent of females sometimes (47.7%) and never (9.9%) liking math, which alludes to the fact that the masculine

predominant study of maths is being reproduced within schools and persists to be favoured by males in contemporary Irish society.

Table 4: Crosstab "Do you like Maths?"

			Person 2 gender Wave 5 Grid (Study Child)		Total
			male	female	
Q3a. Do you like Maths?	Always like it	Count	2175	1672	3847
		% within Person 2 gender Wave 5 Grid (Study Child)	54.9%	42.4%	48.7%
	Sometimes like it	Count	1424	1880	3304
		% within Person 2 gender Wave 5 Grid (Study Child)	35.9%	47.7%	41.8%
	Never like it	Count	365	389	754
		% within Person 2 gender Wave 5 Grid (Study Child)	9.2%	9.9%	9.5%
Total	Count	3964	3941	7905	
	% within Person 2 gender Wave 5 Grid (Study Child)	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Table 5: Chi-Square "Do you like Maths?"

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	129.401 ^a	2	.000
Likelihood Ratio	129.790	2	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	79.124	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	7905		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 375.90.

I can accept the hypothesis that there is a significant association between gender and whether the child enjoys reading as the asymptomatic significant value present in the chi square below is 0.00. The Phi value of 0.2 reveals there the strength of the association is weak. As predicted, a higher percent of females enjoy reading (68.5%), compared to males (55%) and a

higher percent of males only sometimes and never like reading. This is significant in terms of the subject of English being taught in secondary schools, which is predominantly a female concentrated career path, this is also interesting in demonstrating how the interests of children play a part in what they aspire to.

Table 6: Crosstab "Do you like Reading?"

		Person 2 gender Wave 5 Grid (Study Child)		Total	
		male	female		
Q3b. Do you like Reading?	Always like it	Count	2180	2701	4881
		% within Person 2 gender Wave 5 Grid (Study Child)	55.0%	68.5%	61.7%
	Sometimes like it	Count	1539	1139	2678
		% within Person 2 gender Wave 5 Grid (Study Child)	38.8%	28.9%	33.9%
	Never like it	Count	244	102	346
		% within Person 2 gender Wave 5 Grid (Study Child)	6.2%	2.6%	4.4%
Total	Count	3963	3942	7905	
	% within Person 2 gender Wave 5 Grid (Study Child)	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Table 7: Chi-Square "Do you like Reading?"

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	173.581 ^a	2	.000
Likelihood Ratio	175.667	2	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	173.553	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	7905		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 172.54.

Hobbies

It is clear from analysing the statistics of the GUI that the activities engaged with by children in childhood impact their aspirations which is also supported by a string of research and theory outlined in the literature review which highlights how everyday taken for granted aspects of childhood contribute to a gendered social order. When analysing the chi square it is clear I can reject the null hypothesis that there is not a relationship between the gender of the child and how they spend their free time as the significant value is below 0.5. There is also a moderate strength of association in relation to the Phi value of 0.358. It is clear from the crosstab table below that there is a higher percent of males that prefer to spend their free time engaged in activities such as sports and internet/gaming, compared to a higher percent of females enjoying hobbies such as art/drama, general play, spending time with family and reading, these statistics are extremely relevant in terms of the kinds of skills and nature of skills children in opposite gender groups engage with in their free time and how the nature of these preferred hobbies differ in terms of public and private spheres, as males predominantly prefer public and team activities compared to females preferring independent and private sphere activities it is important to note what this may reveal in terms of socialisation into motherhood and gender roles for the future.

Table 8: Crosstab "Free Time"

		Person 2 gender Wave 5 Grid (Study Child)		Total	
		male	female		
Child Free Time Recode	sports	Count	1582	767	2349
		% within Person 2 gender Wave 5 Grid (Study Child)	39.2%	19.2%	29.3%
	art and drama	Count	125	721	846
		% within Person 2 gender Wave 5 Grid (Study Child)	3.1%	18.1%	10.5%
	Internet/Gaming/Screen	Count	951	500	1451
		% within Person 2 gender Wave 5 Grid (Study Child)	23.6%	12.5%	18.1%
	play	Count	821	1032	1853
		% within Person 2 gender Wave 5 Grid (Study Child)	20.3%	25.9%	23.1%
	family	Count	172	270	442
		% within Person 2 gender Wave 5 Grid (Study Child)	4.3%	6.8%	5.5%
	reading	Count	193	508	701
		% within Person 2 gender Wave 5 Grid (Study Child)	4.8%	12.7%	8.7%
	unknown	Count	193	191	384
		% within Person 2 gender Wave 5 Grid (Study Child)	4.8%	4.8%	4.8%
	Total	Count	4037	3989	8026
		% within Person 2 gender Wave 5 Grid (Study Child)	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 9: Chi-Square "Free Time"

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1029.889 ^a	6	.000
Likelihood Ratio	1087.926	6	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	216.474	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	8026		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 190.85.

Activities/Material Culture

The associations I have tested under this subheading and how they fit into the research done throughout the literature review pose quite useful in creating conclusions for my thesis as it is significant to delve deeper into these activity patterns and see how aspects of an everyday routine from the chores undergone by children to the genre of books they prefer reveals significant gendered patterns in society that seem to persist at this micro level but ultimately create macro level impacts on the sex segregated labour force and aspirations of these children. It is clear from the chi-square value being less than 0.5 that there is a significant association between gender and whether the child prefers to read novels/fiction. The Phi value 0.191, shows the strength of this association is weak. A higher percent of females 87.8% like reading novels compared to 72.6% of males who like to read novels.

Table 10: Crosstab "What do you like to read (Stories or Novels)?"

		Person 2 gender Wave 5 Grid (Study Child)		Total	
		male	female		
Q20a. What do you like to read (in print or online)? - Stories or novels	No	Count	1105	485	1590
		% within Person 2 gender Wave 5 Grid (Study Child)	27.4%	12.2%	19.8%
	Yes	Count	2932	3504	6436
		% within Person 2 gender Wave 5 Grid (Study Child)	72.6%	87.8%	80.2%
Total	Count	4037	3989	8026	
	% within Person 2 gender Wave 5 Grid (Study Child)	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Table 11: Chi-Square "What do you like to read (Stories or Novels)?"

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2- sided)	Exact Sig. (2- sided)	Exact Sig. (1- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	292.321 ^a	1	.000		
Continuity Correction ^b	291.364	1	.000		
Likelihood Ratio	298.910	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test				.000	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	292.285	1	.000		
N of Valid Cases	8026				

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 790.25.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

This investigation continues in comparing the fact that a higher percent of males prefer to read factual books instead of fiction. This reveals that the young male population of Ireland are more orientated towards facts and statistics which may feed into the jobs they intend on pursuing that deal with facts rather than females who enjoy these fictional stories and how these opposing genres of books instil different values in the children. I can reject the null hypothesis that there is no association between gender and whether children enjoy reading books that explain things from the value, 0.00. The strength of this association is weak as the Phi value is 0.064.

Table 12: Crosstab "What do you like to read (books that explain things)?"

		Person 2 gender Wave 5 Grid (Study Child)		Total	
		male	female		
Q20b. What do you like to read (in print or online)? - Books that explain things	No	Count	2732	2931	5663
		% within Person 2 gender Wave 5 Grid (Study Child)	67.7%	73.5%	70.6%
	Yes	Count	1305	1058	2363
		% within Person 2 gender Wave 5 Grid (Study Child)	32.3%	26.5%	29.4%
Total	Count	4037	3989	8026	

% within Person 2 gender Wave 5 Grid (Study Child)	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
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Table 13: Chi-Square "What do you like to read (Books that explain things)?"

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2- sided)	Exact Sig. (2- sided)	Exact Sig. (1- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	32.525 ^a	1	.000		
Continuity Correction ^b	32.247	1	.000		
Likelihood Ratio	32.573	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test				.000	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	32.521	1	.000		
N of Valid Cases	8026				

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1174.43.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

It is important to analyse the variable of the nature of chores that children carry out as the type of chores can reveal gendered patterns and norms that are perpetuated invisibly in the household. I can accept the hypothesis that there is a relationship between the gender of the child and whether they cook as part of their chores, as the value is 0.00. Also there is a low/moderate strength of this association 0.211. There is a higher percent of girls that overall help with cooking for the family as part of their chores and daily routines at home (16.3% vs 9.2%). This is quite significant as it is a form of domestic private sphere socialisation of young girls and ultimately trains girls into believing that their best career path should be that of a caring nature and also that the ultimate goal for them should be that of motherhood and looking after the household.

Table 14: Crosstab "Do you do any of these chores at home (Help with cooking for the family)?"

			Person 2 gender Wave 5 Grid (Study Child)		Total
			male	female	
Q21a. Do you do any of these chores or jobs at home? - Help with cooking for the family	Often	Count	365	644	1009
		% within Person 2 gender Wave 5 Grid (Study Child)	9.2%	16.3%	12.8%
	Occasionally/Sometimes	Count	1792	2276	4068
		% within Person 2 gender Wave 5 Grid (Study Child)	45.3%	57.7%	51.5%
	Never	Count	1803	1022	2825
		% within Person 2 gender Wave 5 Grid (Study Child)	45.5%	25.9%	35.8%
Total	Count	3960	3942	7902	
	% within Person 2 gender Wave 5 Grid (Study Child)	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Table 15: Chi-Square "Do you do any of these chores or jobs at home (Help with cooking for the family)?"

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	350.608 ^a	2	.000
Likelihood Ratio	354.595	2	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	326.258	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	7902		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 503.35.

There is a significant statistical relationship between gender and whether the child takes the bins out as the value is 0.00 and the strength of this association is low, 0.139 low. A higher percent of males are involved in this chore on a daily basis compared to young girls, this is a physical heavy lifting task and is what I expected to be the answer as many times the idea around the nature of this chore is often perceived as a “man’s job”.

Table 16: Crosstab "Do you do any of these chores at home (take out bins)?"

			Person 2 gender Wave 5 Grid (Study Child)		Total
			male	female	
Q21e. Do you do any of these chores or jobs at home? - Putting out the bin	Often	Count	867	554	1421
		% within Person 2 gender Wave 5 Grid (Study Child)	21.9%	14.1%	18.0%
	Occasionally/Sometimes	Count	1578	1374	2952
		% within Person 2 gender Wave 5 Grid (Study Child)	39.8%	34.9%	37.4%
	Never	Count	1516	2014	3530
		% within Person 2 gender Wave 5 Grid (Study Child)	38.3%	51.1%	44.7%
Total	Count	3961	3942	7903	
	% within Person 2 gender Wave 5 Grid (Study Child)	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Table 17: Chi-Square "Do you do any of these chores at home (take out bins)?"

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	153.253 ^a	2	.000
Likelihood Ratio	154.066	2	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	151.746	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	7903		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 708.79.

Occupational Aspirations

The idea that women are more caring and are more capable than men in dealing with care giving roles vs males dominating harsh emotionless public large corporation managerial jobs is tied into the ideas derived from historical process of constructing the idea of the masculine v feminine. It needs to be highlighted how these ideas are perpetuated and ultimately play out

through childhood. This is revealed in the GUI data in relation to the occupational aspirations of these children when comparing to gender which we can accept that there is a significant statistical relationship as the chi square value is 0.00. Also, there is a moderate association between gender and the response categories revealed through the Phi value of 0.333. There is a higher percent of females that aspire to occupations in the sphere of teaching than males and also a higher percent of males who aspire to science-based jobs.

Table 18: Crosstab "Occupational Aspirations"

			Person 2 gender Wave 5 Grid (Study Child)		Total
			male	female	
Child Occupational Aspirations recode	No Occupational Aspiration	Count	352	229	581
		% within Person 2 gender Wave 5 Grid (Study Child)	8.7%	5.7%	7.2%
	Teaching Occupational Aspiration	Count	113	1042	1155
		% within Person 2 gender Wave 5 Grid (Study Child)	2.8%	26.1%	14.4%
	Science Occupational Aspiration	Count	165	115	280
		% within Person 2 gender Wave 5 Grid (Study Child)	4.1%	2.9%	3.5%
	All other Occupational Aspirations	Count	3407	2603	6010
		% within Person 2 gender Wave 5 Grid (Study Child)	84.4%	65.3%	74.9%
Total	Count	4037	3989	8026	
	% within Person 2 gender Wave 5 Grid (Study Child)	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Table 19: Chi-Square "Occupational Aspirations"

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	889.491 ^a	3	.000
Likelihood Ratio	1004.082	3	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	275.463	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	8026		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 139.16.

To conclude the findings of this univariate and bivariate analysis of my chosen variables reveals that many gendered patterns persist in relation to school subjects, hobbies and occupational aspirations children in Ireland today prefer evoking ideas of Butler and gender performance and also the idea of interpretive reproduction as children seem to interpret what the acceptable role for their gender in society is through even the smallest things as the household chores they are assigned.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

“Gender is the product of everyday social doings”, the aim of this research project was to explore the relationship between gender and children’s preferred activities such as hobbies and school subjects and to provide an insight into how this relationship impacts the occupational aspirations of these children (Zimmerman 1987:126). I utilised the Growing Up in Ireland wave five data set in order to expose how different gender patterns and roles are experienced throughout childhood in the Irish context and demonstrate how the types of skills and knowledge children acquire impact their future choices in terms of occupations. This study highlights how gender ideologies and scripts are continuing to be reproduced in the context of education and extracurricular activities which has a profound impact on the aspirations of children and is one of the causes of the highly gender segregated labour market in Ireland that persists.

Analysing the data of the infant cohort ’08 allowed me to make inferences and conclusions that are generalizable to the larger population. The findings I have illustrated in the previous chapter allow me to form conclusions and support previous research that argues, “gender is not a thing but a process and one which is never finished as it is something people do and perform as opposed to something they naturally have” (O’Donohoe 2014:58). When analysing my findings in relation to the variable school it was clear gender had a significant impact on whether children enjoyed school and their favourite subject, demonstrating how the process of sex segregation and preferences are continuing to be reproduced even at the level of subject preferences. It is clear from the distribution that a higher percent of male students prefer the subject of maths and a higher percent of females prefer reading, this contributes and expands on previous research in relation to how: “girls participate in activities that reinforce verbal and interpersonal reasoning such as reading and drama”,

compared to boys who value activities that produce rewards and specific results, like the subject of maths (Askew 2014:2).

As research suggests time spent in stereotypical activities predict more traditional role attitudes, which rings true when looking at the variable of children's favourite way to spend their free time, as a higher percent of females preferred to spend their time engaging in activities such as spending time with family, playing with toys, reading and art in huge contrast to the males who preferred sports. This contributes to prior research as it expands the argument that there is a justification of gender norms and attitudes, such as females being better care givers compared to males who prefer more physical, team sport activities, which is utilised to create an ideology that certain roles in life "require gender specific characteristics", limiting the potential of young children and the undermining of their own capabilities down to the simple fact of their gender, "participation in extracurricular activities provides opportunities for individuals to develop competencies on tasks they value and find important" (Ceika 1999:415).

When looking at the relationship between gender and the activities children engage with it is clear that children "learn normative conceptions through discipline" (Gansen 2019:393). Focusing on the material culture of children, a higher proportion of female respondents preferred novels and stories compared to a higher proportion of males preferring factual books/ books that explain things. This is important to identify as previous research has also found, "fiction of all kinds can transmit ideal's identity models and patterns for sense making about work and organization" (Griffin 2017:871). It is clear from previous findings that "socialisation processes are instrumental in shaping occupational aspirations and values", therefore reading such books may socialise boys into believing that STEM jobs are the more likely and appropriate aspiration for them compared to young girls who may sway toward a more artistic profession. When looking at the distribution of chores engaged with by children

it is clear a higher percent of the boys engage with the more physically taxing exercise of taking out the bins, whereas girls help with the more domestic, feminised side of tasks such as cooking. This expands on previous literature that has engaged with the idea that how different genders are treated/disciplined contributes to reproduction of gender scripts and expectations that are ultimately more harmful in terms of limiting children's ability to see their place in the world.

Using the feminist and gender sociological frameworks of theorists such as Butler, Gilman, Connell and Zimmerman provide a useful lens in analysing the data in relation to the variable occupational aspirations, as a high body of theory supports my view that the impacts of gender organisation, socialisation and performativity filtered throughout institutions such as school and through the everyday activities and toys children utilise ultimately has long lasting effects on the Psyche of children and how they understand their place in society. When looking at the statistics it is clear a higher percent of females aspires to jobs in the teaching sector compared to males who aspire to jobs in the science sphere. This clear inequality among gender occupational aspirations demonstrates how "gender routines are accomplishments embedded in everyday interaction" (Gansen 2019:394). This also draws on the ideas and concept of performativity of Goffman and gender display and also Gilman's argument of how gender is used as a powerful ideological display to benefit others which is then internalised by children through play which supports Corsaro's idea of interpretive reproduction. Ultimately all of the activities above have morphed into a process of preparing children to fit into their perceived cultural and gender specific roles to reproduce patriarchal capitalism, a form of "organizational readiness" (Griffin 2017:869).

A significant issue that emerges from conducting this research is that children continue despite radical changes in society such as the liberation of women, to have a narrow mind in terms of the occupations they aspire to as a result of the narrow gender norms and ideas that

are imposed upon them through multiple aspects of society, it is also of much significance as it highlights how the activities and hobbies of children in Ireland still continue to be highly gender segregated developing certain skill in specific gender categories limiting the understanding of young girls and boys capabilities. Overall this research project contributes to the literature on the gendered patterns of children's occupational aspirations as there is not a lot of previous research that have utilised the feminist frameworks of gender performativity in relation to Goffman and Butler, also past research has been significantly focused on the responses and opinions of teachers and parents/guardians of children rather than children themselves, therefore this article contributes as it gives authority and voice to that of the children experiencing these gender socialisation practices in the modern day Irish context. My research also is a form of secondary data analysis, whereas past research has focused on that of primary research through the conducting of interviews and surveys. Also, the specific age range I haven't focused on has not been studied in this context, which is an extremely important age range as these pre-teen years are some of the most formative years in terms of understanding gender ideologies which are imprinted onto their minds and bodies through images, advertisements, toys and books. These findings are of particular relevance today as it highlights how more effort needs to be made within the Irish context and indeed the wider world to reduce the gendered ideas and images that circulate and work to oppress young girls and likewise boys in order to create a more equal labour force and occupational stage. These changes can be made in terms of school policy and the promotion of more young girls being integrated and encouraged to participate in male dominated sport and activities in order to open up their minds to a wider range of future possibilities and in order to make sure society does not continue to reproduce the narrative of the domestic young woman and the breadwinner hard working man. This research highlights that change is urgent in terms of

oppressive gender narratives in terms of the micro processes of play and sport that ultimately lead to the macro institutional level organisation of the labour force and social world.

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Appendix:

Table 20: List of Independent and Dependant Variables:

Variable name (in the dataset):	Question asked in the questionnaire:	Response categories:	Level of Measurement:
P2sexW5	Gender	1= male 2= female	nominal
bcq5q1	What do you think about school?	1= always 2= sometimes 3= never	ordinal
bcq5q3a	Do you like maths?	1= always 2= sometimes 3= never	ordinal
bcq5q3b	Do you like reading?	1= always 2= sometimes 3= never	ordinal
childfreetime	Childs Free Time	1= sports 2= drama 3= internet/gaming 4= play 5= family 6= reading 7= unknown	nominal
bcq5q20a	What do you like to read? (stories of novels)	1= Yes 2= No	nominal
bcq5q20b	What do you like to read? (books that explain things)	1= Yes 2= No	nominal
bcq5q21a	Do you do any of these chores or jobs at home? (help with cooking for the family)	1=Often 2=Sometimes 3=Never	ordinal
bcq5q21e	Do you do any of these chores or jobs at home? (putting out the bin)	1=Often 2=Sometimes 3=Never	ordinal
childoccaspiration	Occupational Aspiration	1= no occupational aspiration 2= teaching occupational aspiration 3= science occupational aspiration	Nominal

		4= all other occupational aspirations	
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Table 21: Symmetric Measures "Do you like School?"

		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.178	.000
	Cramer's V	.178	.000
N of Valid Cases		7904	

Table 22: Symmetric Measures "Do you like Maths?"

		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.128	.000
	Cramer's V	.128	.000
N of Valid Cases		7905	

Table 23: Symmetric Measures "Do you like Reading?"

		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.148	.000
	Cramer's V	.148	.000
N of Valid Cases		7905	

Table 24: Symmetric Measures "Free Time"

		Value	Approximate Significance

Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.358	.000
	Cramer's V	.358	.000
N of Valid Cases		8026	

Table 25: Symmetric Measures "Do you like reading (Stories and Novels)?"

		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	-.064	.000
	Cramer's V	.064	.000
N of Valid Cases		8026	

Table 26: Symmetric Measures "Do you do any of these chores around the house (help with cooking for the family)?"

		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.211	.000
	Cramer's V	.211	.000
N of Valid Cases		7902	

Table 27: Symmetric Measures "Do you do any of these chores at home (taking out the bins)?"

		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.139	.000
	Cramer's V	.139	.000
N of Valid Cases		7903	

Table 28: Symmetric Measures "Occupational Aspirations"

		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.333	.000

Cramer's V	.333	.000
N of Valid Cases	8026	

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